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ABSTRACT

Family support staff need a broad range of knowledge and skills and an understanding of the multiple psychosocial, biological, and cultural factors influencing human behavior, development, and relationships. This training curriculum, based on concepts of adult learning and the assumption that feeling and self-reflection are at the core of learning, is designed to introduce new staff to the principles and practices of family support, providing a basic survey of issues and concepts that practitioners are likely to encounter in direct family support work. The interactive curriculum is comprised of 8 modules, designed to take 5 days for groups of 10 to 30 participants. Two additional modules on support groups and working as a team are included in appendices. The curriculum guide begins with an introduction describing the curriculum and trainers' qualifications. A training overview details the purpose and participant learning goals for each training day. The eight training modules are: (1) principles and practices of family support programs; (2) family support models and practice; (3) appreciating diversity; (4) building relationships with families; (5) home visiting; (6) exploring family strengths and developing Family Partnership Plans; (7) building community; and (8) supporting families in center-based programs. Trainer notes provide suggestions for planning, adapting the program, concluding, and evaluating the program. Each training module presents the purpose and participant learning goals; delineates the time required, materials provided or needed, and trainer preparation steps;

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details activities, including discussion, mini-lectures, and videotapes; lists recommended readings; and contains relevant handouts. (KB)

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An Introductory Training Program for Family Support Staff

Learning to Be Partners

Lynn E. Pooley, Editor

Flora Woratschek
and Jeanne Williams, Co-Editors

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Family Resource Coalition of America
Center for Assessment and Policy Development
University of Pittsburgh • Office of Child Development

An
Introductory
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Program
for Family
Support
Staff

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Family Resource Coalition of America
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Introduction

This training program is designed to provide an introduction to the principles and practices of family support. Its targeted audience is new staff who will work directly with families in family support programs. It presents a basic survey of issues and concepts that practitioners are likely to encounter in family support work.

The authors cannot express too strongly the idea that *Learning to be Partners* is only the beginning step in a family support practice training process.

Family support staff need a broad range of knowledge and skills and an understanding of the multiple psychosocial, biological, and cultural factors affecting human behavior, development, and relationships. These types of knowledge and skills can be developed only through experience working with families and through ongoing training; in short, they take time. *Learning to Be Partners* is meant to immerse new staff in program practice briefly. It is expected that family support programs will offer many opportunities for further staff development and training. For more experienced practitioners, or those who wish for more than an introduction to family support concepts, additional resources are available by contacting the Family Resource Coalition of America.

The Approach of This Curriculum

Learning to Be Partners is based on several concepts of adult learning. The authors believe that feeling and self-reflection are at the core of learning. By *doing*—engaging in discussion or acting a role play—and *thinking* about what we are doing, we begin to feel the impact of what we are learning and to remember the learning experience.

While conducting the training, it is important to remember that *Learning to Be Partners*:

- Is a group experience rather than a classroom situation
- Encourages active participation by all members
- Provides a place for practicing new skills
- Uses peer interaction and sharing
- Focuses on development of family support practice skills
- Provides a place for validation and support
- Offers experiences that enhance learning by combining doing, thinking, and feeling

The eight modules in the training program will take five full days to complete. Although the modules can be used individually, the authors strongly recommend that they be used sequentially, because learning that takes place in one module is reinforced in subsequent sessions throughout the curriculum. If modules are completed sequentially, only the first few icebreakers should be used to introduce participants to each other; in this case, icebreakers in modules three through 11 should be used only to introduce the new topic. Two additional modules, "Support Groups" and "Working as a Team," are included as appendices and may be used if time allows.

Learning to Be Partners is an interactive training program. A group of 10 to 30 participants (maximum) is recommended. If a larger number of individuals need training, it is strongly recommended that the sessions be presented more than once to keep the group small. Presenting the training to a larger group will significantly increase the amount of time required; time estimates given in the curriculum should be adjusted if a large group size cannot be avoided.

Given the complex nature of family support work, trainers using this curriculum should have at least three to five years of experience working in family support and experience working directly with families. Training participants' questions cannot all be answered by any one curriculum. An experienced trainer can field these questions, providing answers and directing trainees to further resources. Recommended readings are provided at the end of each module. The trainer with a rich background and extensive knowledge and experience is the primary resource for trainees taking part in *Learning to Be Partners*, and is the key to the success of this and any other family support training.

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Learning To Be Partners:
An Introductory Training Program for Family Support Staff

Training Overview

Day One

1. **Principles and Practices of Family Support Programs**

Purpose:
To provide a brief overview of the principles and practices of family support programs.

Goals:
By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- Understand the typical program components that comprise family support programs
- Identify the basic assumptions upon which family support programs are based
- Discuss several examples of family support programs

2. **Family Support Models and Practice**

Purpose:
To learn how the principles of family support have created new approaches to providing services to families

Goals:
By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- Discuss the critical differences between traditional human service practices and family support practice
- Describe how the principles of family support can be implemented in providing services to families
- Discuss examples of family support programs

Day Two

3. **Appreciating Diversity**

Purpose:
To heighten awareness of cultural differences

Goals:
By the end of this session, participants will:

- Be more aware of their own beliefs, values, and ways of thinking and behaving regarding race and culture
- Know how to develop strategies for dealing with differences
- Be able to interact more effectively and appropriately with families they serve

4. Building Relationships With Families

Purpose:
To increase participants' abilities to build relationships with families

Goals:
By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- Understand the nature of learning relationships
- Employ strategies for effectively joining with families and encouraging them to discover and exercise their power
- Practice communication skills that build empowering learning relationships with families

Day Three

5. Home Visiting

Purpose:
To understand home visiting as an effective family support strategy

Goals:
By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- Describe the benefits and challenges of a home visiting program
- Define the role and tasks of the home visitor
- Identify some of the ethical issues involved in working with families
- Define ways to empower and support community-based family support staff working with families and young children in the context of the home environment

Day Four

6. Exploring Family Strengths and Developing Family Partnership Plans

Purpose:
To produce an overview of family strengths and to understand how to set goals and develop action plans

Goals:
By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- Discuss the purpose and importance of family strengths
- Demonstrate an understanding of assessment as an ongoing process
- Demonstrate an ability to set appropriate goals with families
- Develop action plans with families

Day Five

7. Building Community

Purpose:
To help participants understand the dynamics of community development and the mutual importance of the community and the family support program

Goals:
By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- Discuss how the needs of the residents of a specific neighborhood affect family support program development and practice in that neighborhood
- Identify key community resources and opportunities to form partnerships with other community members
- Demonstrate community-organizing techniques
- Begin to develop an understanding of community development

8. Supporting Families in Center-Based Programs

Purpose:
To understand and become familiar with center-based strategies used to support families

Goals:
By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- Understand how their past personal experience with families can be both a resource and a barrier in their work with families
- Describe different types of family structure
- Define the functions that families perform
- Plan center-based service strategies to support families

Day Six (Optional)

Appendix A: Working as a Team

Purpose:
To understand and explore the notion that teamwork is central to successful supportive work with families

Goals:
By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- Provide a brief overview and definition of teams and teamwork
- Explore the team building-blocks (establishing trust, identifying the mission, discovering leadership, and establishing roles and responsibilities)
- Articulate and describe the stages of team development (forming, storming, norming, and performing)
- Develop a set of common protocols (a code of conduct) for both how team members will operate with each other and how the team will work with families
- Identify some of the obstacles to teamwork and opportunities for operating team rules
- Begin designing team approaches to working with families

Day Seven (Optional)

Appendix B: Support Groups

Purpose:
To understand how support groups can be an effective family support strategy within a larger service delivery system

Goals:
By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- Discuss the benefits of support groups
- Describe the logistics involved in organizing support groups
- Identify strategies for successful maintenance of support groups
- Demonstrate an understanding of group process and development
- Demonstrate effective group facilitation skills
- Discuss strategies for dealing with various personalities in group settings

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Trainer Notes

Approach

It is important to remember that family support represents an approach to working with families. Many specific practices of family support programs, such as those related to child development and case management, are not addressed in this training program; these specific practices were omitted to create a training program that is not model-specific and therefore is applicable in a wide variety of family support settings. This training is intended to model and reflect the principles of family support, which are highlighted in the first module.

Planning

Trainers should have practical experience in the subject(s) covered by the module(s) on which they are conducting training. Also, to appeal to the learning styles of all of the participants in the training, it is beneficial for a different trainer to conduct each module, and for those trainers to represent different training styles, offer diverse learning opportunities, and provide participants with different practical experiences. Individual trainers will, therefore, need to be given enough preparation time to personalize the modules. If multiple trainers are utilized it is recommended that one person, such as a training coordinator, be present each day to introduce trainers, answer logistical questions, ensure that evaluations are completed, and provide some overall continuity for the group.

Adapting the Training Program

While *Learning to Be Partners* has a specific format, trainers are encouraged to tailor the activities and format in ways that best fit local program needs and audiences. Creative trainers constantly customize their training programs.

As part of the format of the program, certain key pieces of information are identified by a quotation mark icon. These phrases are offered as examples and are not meant to be spoken literally. For ease of use, they are phrased as scripts, but of course trainers may want to use their own language to express the same ideas.

It is understood that it is often difficult for busy programs to find adequate time for training. That is why this program is designed to be held over a period of one week. Two additional modules, "Working as a Team" and "Support Groups," have been included in the program. While the modules are listed as optional, this by no means diminishes their importance. Trainers may wish to create their own menu of modules, based upon their particular needs and audiences.

Concluding the Training Program

Trainers will need to develop a closing session for the training program. The content of the session will depend, to a large extent, on how the training proceeded, how long it lasted, and the "mood" of the participants.

If trainers feel that participants need a review or reinforcement of learning, a working closing session might be appropriate. Ideas for a working closing session include:

- Answering final questions and concerns
- Using activities or exercises that help participants recall what they have learned
- Creating role-play activities that provide an opportunity for participants to demonstrate skills they have learned
- Leading a discussion on how participants will apply what they have learned when working with families

If your training program lasts a full week or longer, participants deserve a fun way of concluding the program. Ideas for a fun closing session include:

- Providing a party or celebration, with food and games
- Holding a graduation ceremony and providing participants with certificates or creative prizes for completing the training
- Creating a closing circle in which participants are invited to express final sentiments about the training experience
- Having participants create a product that expresses their sentiments about the training and the value of the group, such as taking group polaroid photographs and making frames for them; composing a group song or cheer; designing a group logo; or making humorous awards for each other

With careful planning, the closing session can provide time for a little bit of work and then some fun! In the closing session, trainers should always acknowledge the hard work and efforts participants have contributed to making the training a success.

Additional Information

If possible, it is recommended that a representative of the local child protective services agency be invited to address the group about laws regarding legislatively mandated reporting of child abuse and neglect.

Evaluation

Training participants should evaluate the training in some way. Participants can be asked to give their impressions of the training verbally or on paper. Evaluation can occur at the end of each module or day, while the material is still fresh in the participants' minds, or it can be conducted at the completion of the training program, for overall impressions. These approaches may be used independently of or in combination with one another. Reconvening the group for longer-term follow-up after several weeks or months will allow participants to share how they were able to apply concepts and skills learned on the job. This will also give the group another chance to experience peer support.

Logistics

The training should be located in a comfortable place where there is space for table and chairs to be moved around for group activities. Considerations about lunch should be made in advance. Lunches can be catered for the group to share together. If participants are to bring their own meals, they should be informed of this in advance, and should be told whether there will be a refrigerator and microwave available. A list of nearby restaurants, shops, etc., as well as directions on how to find them, are useful. Directions to the location of training and the parking facilities should be clear and accurate.

Module 1

Principles and Practices of Family Support Programs

Purpose

This module provides a brief overview of the principles and practices of family support programs.

Goals

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- Understand the typical program components that comprise family support programs
- Identify the basic assumptions upon which family support programs are based
- Discuss several examples of family support programs

AGENDA

		3 hours
Activity	Icebreakers	25 minutes
Mini-Lecture	Introducing the Topic	5 minutes
Activity	Principles and Practices of Family Support Programs	35 minutes
Break		15 minutes
Videotape & Discussion	*Our Families, Our Future*	60-80 minutes
Mini-Lecture	Family Supportive Practices	15 minutes
Mini-Lecture	Summary	5 minutes
Activity	Review (optional)	30 minutes

Time required

3 hours

Materials provided

Our Families, Our Future videotape; handouts

Materials needed

Easel, newsprint, markers, tape; copies of handouts for trainees; VCR and monitor

Trainer preparation

Review module, photocopy handouts, read recommended reading

ACTIVITY 1A

Icebreakers

25 minutes

Welcome the group to the training and introduce yourself. Feel free to use one or both of the following icebreakers.

Icebreaker A

Go around the room and ask each person to tell everyone their name and how they got it. Start with yourself.

Icebreaker B

Step 1.

Ask participants to take several minutes to think of answers to the following two questions:

- What sort of relationship should be established between the trainer and participants during this workshop?
- What attitude should the trainer have toward the participants during the training?

Step 2.

Ask each person to give their name, and their answers to these questions. Ask people not to repeat a response if it has already been given. Write the answers on newsprint.

Step 3.

The answers should include the ideas that the relationship between the trainer and the participants should be one of equality and respect, that participants should be seen as resources and should be active participants in the training, and that the experience and knowledge that participants bring to the training is as valued as that brought by the trainer. Explain that these concepts reflect the core of the work of family support, which is the relationship built between workers and families.

The first principle of family support states: staff and families work together in relationships based on equality and respect.

Introducing the Topic

1B MINI-LECTURE

5 minutes

“ …

Family support programs began emerging in the 1970s as parents expressed their need for more support and as professionals that worked with families realized that preventing problems was the most efficient approach to providing services. These programs have continued to grow in number through the 1980s and 1990s, and although their settings and the resources they offer vary widely, one goal is shared by every program: to increase the capacity of all families to nurture their children and the capacity of all communities to nurture families. In the next few hours we will be discussing the history, philosophy, principles, and practices of family support programs.

… ”

Principles and Practices of Family Support Programs

1C ACTIVITY

35 minutes

The following mini-lecture will provide an overview of the history and philosophy of family support programs. You should feel free to adapt the text of this mini-lecture as you see fit, as long as the key points are addressed. You may wish to use the overhead transparency masters that are provided to highlight portions of the discussion. Throughout your presentation, feel free to elicit comments and questions from the group.

The History of Family Support Programs

“ …

Family support programs (also called family resource programs) began to emerge throughout North America in the late 1970s, as a response to the need for better, more holistic support for families struggling to raise their children in a society that does not always value the role of parents. In many ways, family support programs are old-fashioned. What they do for families is what was once done by churches and extended families and networks of friends in small towns. They provide a sense of belonging, a sense of safety, and a knowledge that there is support and assistance whenever you need it. The grassroots programs that emerged in the seventies addressed the disappearance of these resources for many families, as families moved around more, mothers entered the workforce, and family structures in general changed. People came together in their communities to re-create something they needed.

Familiar antecedents influenced the first family support programs: settlement houses, parent education efforts, Head Start, and self-help groups. In recent years, programs have begun to place more emphasis on empowering participants and meeting needs of families more comprehensively, as programs have proliferated in resource-poor communities and began to serve more socially vulnerable families.

The Important Role of Families

The initial need for family support programs was expressed not only by people who worked with families in social-service agencies, schools, churches, and other community-based institutions, but also by parents.

The influence of the family on a child cannot be overestimated. The family is a child's first source of information and is the primary model for how a child experiences relationships. It helps a child begin to communicate and to learn personal and cultural values and beliefs. The family teaches a child ways to live in a complex world, and it provides a child with a sense of belonging and a foundation for self-esteem. Families, and specifically parents, who are confident and effective in these responsibilities are more likely to raise healthy and productive children than those who are not.

Dramatic changes have occurred in the structure and patterns of family life in the U.S. over the past 20 years. The population has become increasingly mobile, and parents often function without help from extended family. Divorce rates have risen. Many children are born to unmarried mothers or are raised in single-parent households. Others are "latchkey" children whose parents work outside the home. Family support programs have emerged in response to these changes. The settings in which they operate vary widely, as do the types of services and resources they offer to families. But all programs are geared toward a common goal: increasing the ability of families to successfully nurture their children.

Family support programs emphasize a proactive approach toward the prevention of problems. To this end, they provide supports that can enhance effective functioning within the family. At the same time, they foster family self-sufficiency and empowerment. The structured incorporation of the family into all aspects of programs to enhance a child's development sets family support programs apart from other kinds of services for families.

In 1991, the Family Resource Coalition of America published a definition of the guiding principles of family support that had evolved over 10 years of work with programs. In 1996 these principles were revised to reflect five years of additional growth and learning in the field. These principles [handout **1-1**] *are as follows:*

➠ Handout provided

1. *Staff and families work together in relationships based on equality and respect.*

2. *Staff enhance families' capacity to support the growth and development of all family members—adults, youth, and children.*

3. *Families are resources to their own members, to other families, to programs, and to communities.*

4. *Policies and practices affirm and strengthen families' ethnic, racial, and linguistic identities and enhance their ability to function in a multicultural society.*

5. *Programs are embedded in their communities and contribute to the community-building process.*

6. *Programs advocate with families for services and systems that are fair, responsive, and accountable to the families served.*

7. *Practitioners work with families to mobilize formal and informal resources to support family development.*

8. *Programs are flexible and continually responsive to family and community issues.*

9. *Principles of family support are modeled in all program activities, including planning, governance, and administration.*

... ”

Family Support Programs: Changing, Growing, and Responding

“ ...

Using these guiding principles, family support programs have come a long way since the late 1970s. The spontaneously formed organizations of parents who wanted information, friendships, and support in raising their children have given way to large complex programs funded by a variety of public sources, complete with target populations, eligibility standards, and outcome measures. The friendly one-person staff that did everything from baking bread to caring for toddlers to producing newsletters has given way to the interdiscipli-

nary team of professionals and trained paraprofessionals. Programs have expanded from providing social opportunities and workshops in child development to addressing a full range of issues from joblessness and illiteracy to child sexual abuse and teen parenting. The settings for family support programs have moved from church basements and kitchen tables to workplaces, schools, health centers, social-service agencies, and community gathering places. … ”

Basic Assumptions of Family Support Programs

Handout provided

All family support programs are based on the following assumptions [handout **1-2**].

“ …

- *Primary Responsibility for the development and well-being of the children lies within the family, and all segments of society must support families as they rear their children.*
- *Assuring the well-being of all families is the cornerstone of a healthy society and requires universal access to support programs and services.*
- *Children and families exist as part of an ecological system.*
- *Child-rearing patterns are influenced by parents' understandings of child development and their children's unique characteristics, personal sense of competence, and cultural and community traditions and mores.*
- *Enabling families to build on their own strengths and capacities promotes the healthy development of children.*
- *The developmental processes that make up parenthood and family life create needs that are unique at each stage in the life span.*
- *Families are empowered when they have access to information and other resources and take action to improve the well-being of children, families, and communities.*

… ”

Program Settings

“ … *Family support programs operate successfully in diverse communities and settings. They typically consist of or are part of a community-*

based program that may be independent or may be linked to another organization such as a school, church, day care center, college or university, health-care facility, or corporation. And, increasingly, the principles of family support are being explored by state-managed delivery systems such as public welfare and child protection agencies. Specific program content and structure are determined by the needs of the families being served and are designed to complement already existing community services and resources.

... ”

Typical Family Support Program Components

[handout **1-3**].

➡ Handout provided

“ ...

Most family support programs include the following:

Life Skills Training
This includes literacy, employment, and vocational training; general education; and enhancement of personal skills such as problem-solving, stress reduction, budgeting, and communication.

Parent classes and support groups
These provide information on and instruction in child development, and opportunities for parents to share their experiences and concerns with peers.

Parent-Child groups and family activities
These provide occasions for parents to spend time with their children in activities that are planned by staff with parent input.

Drop-in Time
This provides informal opportunities for parents to spend time with staff members and other parents.

Childcare
This is usually offered for children whose parents are participating in program activities. Some family support programs also provide childcare as a respite service or as part of a regular childcare center.

Information and referral services
These link families with other community resources.

Advocacy
Efforts may be made on behalf of specific families with distinct concerns or on behalf of the entire community for systems and services that are equitable inclusive and responsive.

Newsletters
Newsletters provide information about program activities, child development, and parenting, as well as listing of local events and resources for families.

Crisis intervention and family counseling
These services respond to parents' special concerns about their children, other family members, and specific family issues

Auxiliary support services
Examples include clothing exchanges, food pantries, and transportation.

At the conclusion of the mini-lecture, ask for questions and feedback about the information shared. Ask the participants to think about the programs in which they will be working or are currently working.

Can you describe ways in which the principles of family support are reflected in the design of your program?

BREAK 1D

15 minutes

VIDEOTAPE 1E

Our Families, Our Future

60 minutes

Now that we've heard a little bit about the history and philosophy of family support programs and have looked at our own program through this lens, let's watch a videotape entitled "Our Families, Our Future and see six different family support programs profiled. The six programs profiled in the video include:

- *Gainesville Family Services Center, Gainesville, Florida*
- *Caring Communities, St. Louis, Missouri*
- *Home Ties, McMinnville, Tennessee*
- *Teen Parenting Program, Plainfield, New Jersey*
- *The National Institute for Responsible Fatherhood and Family Development, Cleveland, Ohio*
- *Healthy Start, Tucson, Arizona*

Distribute the "Video Discussion Questions" handout [**1-4**] and review the questions with participants.

DISCUSSION 1F

20 minutes

➡

Note: Breaking the video into segments allows for more in-depth discussion of the principles and approaches seen, but will add to the time it takes to complete this module.

Videotape viewing and discussion options:

Option 1

Show video in its entirety and discuss at the end.

Option 2

Break the video into sections and discuss the highlights of each segment. For example—

Segment I: Gainesville Family Service Center

Highlights for Discussion:

“ …

- *What evidence do you see that this program is community-based?*
- *Is this center user friendly?*
- *What examples of a holistic approach do you see? (E.g., offering services to the entire family, such as Head Start for Felicia, Even Start for Ashley, First Start for Stephanie, GED classes for Lisa, Parenting and Health Services for the entire family.)*

… ”

Segment II: National Institute for Responsible Fatherhood

Highlights for Discussion:

“ …

- *What examples or evidence do you see of the partnerships that developed between Mr. Ballard and the young fathers?*
- *Where do you see evidence of a strengths orientation in this clip?*
- *How are the fathers treated?*

… ”

After showing the video or individual video segments, incorporate the following questions [handout **1-4**] into your discussions:

“ …

- *How did you see the principle of the focus on relationship between staff and families reflected in the programs?*
- *How did you see the principle of seeing families as resources reflected in the programs?*
- *How did you see the principle of affirming and strengthening families' ethnic, racial and cultural identities reflected in the programs?*
- *How did you see the principle of enhancing family capacity to support growth and development of all family members?*
- *Putting yourself in the parents' shoes, what was it about these programs that would make you want to participate in them?*

… ”

MINI-LECTURE 1G

Family-Supportive Practices

15 minutes

Handout provided

Up until this point, we have talked a great deal about the history of, philosophy of, and services provided by family support programs. What we have just seen in the video is these elements put into practice with a range of different kinds of families. Now let's take a moment to talk about the practices [handout **1-5**] *inherent in family support programs. Discussion idea: After each practice, ask the trainees about examples of these practices they have seen in their own family support program.*

Family support programs are different from other services for families by virtue of the way they incorporate their basic principles into day-to-day practice. Family support programs:

- ***Promote long-term relationships*** *between staff members and parents that are characterized by warmth, responsiveness, and compassion. Wherever they are and for whatever reason they came to the program, all parents receive a warm welcome and an enormous amount of loving care from staff who have been trained to do whatever it takes to encourage and support the parents who walk through their doors.*
- ***Incorporate a variety of educational experiences*** *for parents, which offer them opportunities to increase their knowledge and understanding, to examine their habitual ways of thinking and doing things, and to make positive changes.*
- ***Meet parents "where they are,"*** *knowing that the most effective programs are planned with the involvement of the parents themselves to assure that programs are relevant to the parents' specific interests, concerns, and needs. Program strategies may span from very structured parent education classes to self-help and support groups, from home visits to parent/child activities.*
- ***Build on families' strengths****, understanding that all families have strengths, and these strengths are building blocks for growth and improvement. Family support programs shun a "deficit approach" which focuses only on identifying, analyzing, and correcting problems.*
- ***Acknowledge and address the context in which families exist****, appreciating and valuing each family's community, culture, and individual traditions, values, and life-styles. Insofar as possible, staff members are representative of the participant population.*
- ***Work with parents as partners****, appreciating the value, role, challenges, and satisfactions of parenthood. Family support services balance parents' need to learn information and skills with their need to receive attention and be nurtured.*

- ***Respond to the practical needs of parents*** *who participate. They provide childcare while parents participate in program activities, scholarships when programs charge fees, transportation as needed, and convenient meeting locations.*
- ***Incorporate outreach efforts*** *to recruit families into the program, inform the community of their existence, and promote collaboration with other agencies, services, and organizations.*

... ”

Summary

1H MINI-LECTURE

“ ...

5 minutes

Summarize this session by making the following key points:

- *Family support programs came into existence to ameliorate some of social factors having negative impacts on the families.*
- *The overall goal of family support programs is to create a learning environment that increases the ability of families to successfully nurture their children and to promote ongoing family and community growth and development.*
- *The principles of family support must be infused into all aspects of service delivery: program delivery, planning, governance and administration.*
- *Family support programs come in different shapes and sizes but share many common elements.*
- *Family support programs work to create services and systems that are family and community-friendly.*

... ”

Review (optional)

1I ACTIVITY

30 minutes

A fun way to review what has been learned in this module uses clips from popular films to reinforce what has been learned and to serve as a springboard for discussion and questions. Handout **[1-6]** is a sample form to use with this activity.

Step 1.

Prepare, in advance, a series of clips from popular movies.

Step 2.

Show clip and ask trainees to identify the family support principles they saw "in action."

Step 3.

Continue with next clip to end.

Step 4.

Review, as a group, each clip and allow group members to explain how different clips exemplified family support principles.

RECOMMENDED READING

Goetz, K. (1992) *Programs to Strengthen Families: A Resource Guide*, 3rd edition. (Chicago: Family Resource Coalition of America).

Goetz, K. and S. Peck, eds. (1994) *The Basics of Family Support: A Guide for State Planners (and others)* (Chicago: Family Resource Coalition of America).

Kagan, S. L. ed. (1987) *America's Family Support Programs: Perspectives and Prospects* (New Haven: Yale University Press).

Kagan, S. L.; Weissbourd, Bernice; eds. (1994) *Putting Families First: America's Family Support Movement and the Challenge of Change* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass).

National Resource Center for Family Support Programs (January 1993) *Family Support Programs and Comprehensive and Collaborative Services*, Fact Sheet No. 03 (Chicago).

Weiss, Heather B. (1990) *Community-Based Support and Education Programs: Something Old or Something New?* (New York: National Center for Children in Poverty).

Complementary Material

Family Communications, Inc. and The University of Pittsburgh Office of Child Development with the support of The Howard Heinz Endowment have produced a series of multimedia training materials complementary to *Learning to Be Partners* which will be available by calling (412) 281-3511 in Fall/Winter 1996.

HANDOUTS INCLUDED

1-1 • Principles of Family Support Programs

1-2 • Premises of the Family Support Movement

1-3 • Typical Family Support Program Components

1-4 • Video Discussion Questions—Our Families, Our Future

1-5 • Family-Supportive Practices

1-6 • Family Support Movie Mania

Handout 1-1

Principles of Family Support Programs

1. Staff and families work together in relationships based on equality and respect.

2. Staff enhance families' capacity to support the growth and development of all family members — adults, youth, and children.

3. Families are resources to their own members, to other families, to programs, and to communities.

4. Policies and practices affirm and strengthen families' ethnic, racial, and linguistic identities and enhance their ability to function in a multicultural society.

5. Programs are embedded in their communities and contribute to the community-building process.

6. Programs advocate with families for services and systems that are fair, responsive, and accountable to the families served.

7. Practitioners work with families to mobilize formal and informal resources to support family development.

8. Programs are flexible and continually responsive to family and community issues.

9. Principles of family support are modeled in all program activities, including planning, governance, and administration.

Handout 1-2

Premises of the Family Support Movement

- Primary responsibility for the development and well-being of the children lies within the family, and all segments of society must support families as they rear their children.

- Assuring the well-being of all families is the cornerstone of a healthy society and requires universal access to support programs and services.

- Children and families exist as part of an ecological system.

- Child-rearing patterns are influenced by parents' understandings of child development and their children's unique characteristics, personal sense of competence, and cultural and community traditions and mores.

- Enabling families to build on their own strengths and capacities promotes the healthy development of children.

- The developmental processes that make up parenthood and family life create needs that are unique at each stage in the life span.

- Families are empowered when they have access to information and other resources and take action to improve the well-being of children, families, and communities.

Handout 1-3

Typical Components of Family Support Programs

Life skills training
This includes literacy, employment, and vocational training; general education; and enhancement of personal skills such as problem-solving, stress reduction, budgeting and communication.

Parent classes and support groups
These provide information on and instruction in child development, and opportunities for parents to share their experiences and concerns with peers.

Parent/child groups and family activities
These provide occasions for parents to spend time with their children in activities that are planned by staff with parent input.

Drop-in time
This provides informal opportunities for parents to spend time with staff members and other parents.

Childcare
This is usually offered for children w[illegible] [illegible]ts are participating in program activities. Some family support programs also provide childcare as a respite service or as part of a regular childcare center.

Information and referral services
These link families with other community resources.

Advocacy
Efforts may be made on behalf of specific families with distinct concerns or on behalf of the entire community for systems and services that are equitable, inclusive, and responsive.

Newsletters
Newsletters provide information about program activities, child development, and parenting, as well as listing of local events an resources for families.

Crisis intervention and family counseling
These services respond to parents' special concerns about their children, other family members, and specific family issues

Auxiliary support services
Examples include clothing exchanges, food pantries, and transportation.

Handout 1-4

Video Discussion Questions
Our Families, Our Future

- How did you see the principle of the focus on relationship between staff and families reflected in the programs?
- How did you see the principle of seeing families as resources reflected in the programs?
- How did you see the principle of affirming and strengthening families' ethnic, racial, and cultural identities reflected in the programs?
- How did you see the principle of enhancing family capacity to support growth and development of all family members reflected in the programs?
- Putting yourself in the parents' shoes, what was it about these programs that would make you want to participate in them?

Family-Supportive Practices

- **Promote long-term relationships** between staff members and parents that are characterized by warmth, responsiveness, and compassion. Wherever they are and for whatever reason they came to the program, all parents receive a warm welcome and an enormous amount of loving care from staff who have been trained to do whatever it takes to encourage and support the parents who walk through their doors.
- **Incorporate a variety of educational experiences** for parents, which offer them opportunities to increase their knowledge and understanding, to examine their habitual ways of thinking and doing things, and to make positive changes.
- **Meet parents "where they are,"** knowing that the most effective programs are planned with the involvement of the parents themselves to assure that programs are relevant to the parents' specific interests, concerns, and needs. Program strategies may span from very structured parent education classes to self-help and support groups, from home visits to parent/child activities.
- **Build on families' strengths**, understanding that all families have strengths, and these strengths are building blocks for growth and improvement. Family support programs shun a "deficit approach" which focuses only on identifying, analyzing, and correcting problems.
- **Acknowledge and address the context in which families exist**, appreciating and valuing each family's community, culture, and individual traditions, values, and life-styles. Insofar as possible, staff members are representative of the participant population.
- **Work with parents as partners**, appreciating the value, role, challenges, and satisfactions of parenthood. Family support services balance parents' need to learn information and skills with their need to receive attention and be nurtured.
- **Respond to the practical needs of parents** who participate. They provide childcare while parents participate in program activities, scholarships when programs charge fees, transportation as needed, and convenient meeting locations.
- **Incorporate outreach efforts** to recruit families into the program, inform the community of their existence, and promote collaboration with other agencies, services, and organizations.

Handout 1-6

Family Support Movie Mania

Sample Clip

The Lion King
"Circle of Life"

Ideas:
- Community-based
- Culturally relevant
- Family-driven

Clip #1

Clip #2

Clip #3

Clip #4

Clip #5

Module 2

Family Support Models and Practice

Purpose

To learn how the principles of family support have created new approaches to providing services to families.

Goals

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- Discuss the critical differences between traditional human service practices and family support practice
- Describe how the principles of family support can be implemented in providing services to families
- Discuss examples of family support programs

AGENDA

		4 hours, 20 minutes
Activity	Icebreaker	25 minutes
Mini-Lecture	Introducing the Topic	5 minutes
Discussion	Family Support Philosophy	1 hour
Activity	New Approaches to Practice	45 minutes
Break		15 minutes
Activity	New Approaches to Practice (cont'd.)	20 minutes
Activity	Family Support Practices and Program Design	1 hour, 30 minutes

Time required

½ day

Materials provided

Handouts

Materials needed

Copies of handouts; "New Approaches to Practice" on slips of paper (see "Trainer preparation")

Trainer preparation

Review module, photocopy handouts, write each "to" approach and each "from" approach listed on the "New Approaches to Practice" handout [**2-2**] on a separate slip of paper—use only the words that are underlined, read recommended reading

ACTIVITY 2A

Icebreaker

25 minutes

Welcome the group to the training and introduce yourself.

Ask each participant to think of a change that has occurred in his or her life. These could be changes they chose to make, like getting married or losing weight. Or there could be changes over which they had no control, like losing a job or ending a relationship. Ask the participants to write the answers to the following questions:

1. What was the change?
2. What led to the change?
3. What was difficult about the change?
4. What inner strengths did you discover?
5. What did your experience teach you about the process of change?

Give trainees a few moments to write, then ask them to pair up with another person and share their answers. After they have done this, ask participants to introduce their partners to the group and to say what they learned about that person.

MINI-LECTURE 2B

Introducing the Topic

5 minutes

“. . . *The icebreaker got us thinking about change. For the rest of the afternoon we will think about and discuss a change that has occurred in the field of human services. This change is based on the Principles of Family Support, which we discussed in this morning's session. The principles evolved over many years and are based upon a large body of theoretical knowledge about human development, family systems, early intervention, and the impact of social systems on families. Practitioners, administrators, and academicians also learned many lessons from the "War on Poverty" service programs implemented during the 1960s, especially about the importance of empowering families and communities.*

As family support develops as a movement and as a field, the Principles of Family Support are key. They dictate practice—how direct service providers interact with families. They also guide administrators, workers, and families as they design and develop family support programs. . . . ”

Family Support Philosophy

2C DISCUSSION

1 hour

The philosophy of family support is built on the belief and understanding that all families have strengths and that our role is to work together with families to build on these strengths.

Step 1.
(30 minutes)

Distribute copies of the "Family Support Philosophy" handout [**2-1**] to the group. Read it aloud, then use the following questions to lead the discussion:

- Do you agree with the philosophy?
- What would you eliminate from it?
- What would you add to it?

Step 2.
(30 minutes)

Give the group 15 minutes to answer the questions at the bottom of the handout. Reconvene the group and ask for volunteers to share their responses.

New Approaches to Practice

2D ACTIVITY

45 minutes

It is helpful to identify the differences between family-supportive social services and the traditional modes of delivering services that family support seeks to improve. For the remainder of this session we will look at the more traditional ways services have been provided to families and will compare them with the approaches used in the practice of family support.

Step 1.

Place slips of paper listing items from the "New Approaches to Practice" handout [**2-2**] into a container (see "Trainer preparation") and have each participant take one. Ask them to move throughout the room and try to find the match for their practice. One person will have a traditional ("from") approach and another will have the family support ("to") approach that corresponds to it. If there is an odd number of trainees, join participants in this activity.

Step 2.

When the partners have found each other, ask that each dyad take a few minutes to discuss the two approaches as they would apply to providing family services.

Step 3.

When they are finished, call the group back together and disseminate copies of the "New Approaches to Practice" handout **[2-2]**. Have the dyads report their examples of practice to the larger group. Allow time for discussion and questions.

BREAK 2E

15 minutes

ACTIVITY (cont.)

20 minutes

New Approaches to Practice
(cont.)

Ask participants to refer to the "New Approaches to Practice" handout.

“ …

Imagine yourself as someone who needs a service or someone who is required to seek a service. For example, you've lost your job and need to go to a job training program. The program uses the traditional approach described in the left column of your handout. What words describe your feelings as a participant? Now imagine that the program is based on family support. Again, refer to your handout. How do you feel as a participant in this program?

… ”

Possible Answers:

Traditional approaches:

- Hopelessness
- Self-doubt
- Lowered self-esteem
- Powerlessness

⬅ If these answers are not offered by participants, mention them.

- Self-blame
- "The program owes me something" (blaming others)

Family support approaches:
- Hopefulness
- Belief in self
- Increased self-esteem
- Feeling in control
- Promoting the possible
- "I am responsible for my future" (taking control of my own life)

Family Support Practices and Program Design

2F ACTIVITY

1 hour, 30 minutes

Step 1.
(45 minutes)

Have the participants count off by fours and break into small groups. Distribute the "Task Assignment" handouts [**2-3** to **2-6**]—a different one to each group. Ask the trainees to think about the morning training, when they watched the videotapes depicting family support programs and talked about the services provided by the programs. You may want to quickly review the list of services with them.

“ …

As a group, design a family center to which families can come to get a variety of services. The design of the center should reflect the family support approaches listed on your task assignment. What services would your center provide? How would you provide these services? How would decisions about the center be made? Imagine yourselves as staff working in the center. How would you use family support approaches to interact with program participants? Each group should appoint a recorder who will report to the whole group at the end of this activity.

… ”

As the groups work, circulate among them to answer participants' questions.

Step 2.
(45 minutes)

After 45 minutes, reconvene the large group. Have each recorder give a report, answering the questions on their task assignment.

➠ If these answers are not offered by participants, mention them.

Possible Answers:

What services would your center provide?

- Ongoing parent support groups [long-term thinking]
- Strong resource and referral service [individuals with different social and economic status have similar aspirations; their degrees of access to resources differ]
- Respite childcare, child abuse hotline [emphasis on preventing crises]

How would the services be provided?

- Hire staff of the same cultures as the families served [recognizes and affirms cultural differences]
- Participants serve in volunteer positions in the center [expect much of program participants; families are seen as resources]
- Center offers a variety of services, and families choose the service they wish to use [families choose for themselves]

How would decisions about the center be made?

- Participants serve on advisory committees or are represented in other governing capacities [families set norms and goals]
- Families are involved in evaluation of services [power is shared between staff and families]

How would you interact with families?

- Help families identify and set their own goals [recognizes family strengths]
- Respect what families say they know [people have different kinds of knowledge]
- Do not press opinions and ideas on families [staff's and families' views may be different]

Step 3.

“... *We have looked at a new approach to working with families—family support. Family support emphasizes a proactive approach toward preventing problems—helping families to function more effectively and fostering a sense of family self-sufficiency and empowerment. Family support is not a "service" in itself. It is an improved approach to working with families—a departure from traditional thinking.* ...”

RECOMMENDED READING

Barr, D. and M. Cochran (1992) "Understanding and supporting empowerment: redefining the professional role," *Networking Bulletin: Empowerment and Family Support* 2(3).

Dunst, Carl J. (1994) *Supporting and Strengthening Families: Methods, Strategies and Outcomes.* (Cambridge, Mass.: Brookline)

Dunst, Carl J.; Trivette, M. Carol and A. Deal; (1988) *Enabling and Empowering Families.* (Cambridge, Mass.: Brookline)

Kagan, S. and B. Weissbourd (Eds.) (1994) *Putting Families First: America's Family Support Movement and the Challenge of Change.* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers).

HANDOUTS INCLUDED

2-1 • Family Support Philosophy

2-2 • New Approaches to Practice

2-3 • Task Assignment—Group One

2-4 • Task Assignment—Group Two

2-5 • Task Assignment—Group Three

2-6 • Task Assignment—Group Four

Family Support Philosophy

In order to work in partnership with families we must:

- Respect families
- Recognize and celebrate strengths
- Recognize our own strengths
- Recognize our own challenges
- Open our minds
- Treat parents, children, and staff as peers
- Challenge stereotypes
- Understand children—their growth, their development, their joys and fears
- Be flexible

and...

-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-

Please describe situations in which it is crucial for this philosophy to be employed.

Please describe situations in which it is very difficult to employ this philosophy.

Please share a success story.

Handout 2-2

Adapted from Barr, D. and Cochran, M. "Understanding and supporting empowerment: redefining the professional role," *Networking Bulletin: Empowerment and Family Support* (June 1992).

New Approaches to Practice

From	To
Short-term thinking (relying on quick, easy solutions to serious problems)	Long-term thinking (recognizing that changes in behavior take time and being willing to make a long-term commitment to families)
Emphasis on crisis intervention (treating problems after they have occurred)	Emphasis on the prevention of crisis (prevent problems so they will not occur)
Seeing deficits in families (being aware only of the problems families have)	Seeing strengths of families (being aware of areas where families are able to function)
Ignoring and/or devaluing cultural differences	Recognizing and affirming cultural differences
Expecting little of program participants (families are not expected to make any contribution to the program)	Expecting much of program participants (families are seen as resources to the program)
Individuals of lower social and economic status have different aspirations than those with higher status.	The aspirations of individuals with different social and economic status are similar. Only their degrees of access to resources differ.
Professionals have the right kind of knowledge (reliance on experts to have all the answers)	People have different kinds of knowledge (families have their own areas of expertise)
Organization sets norms and goals for families	Families set norms and goals for themselves
Practitioners choose solutions for families	Families and practitioners choose solutions for families together
Program staff have power over families using programs	Program staff and families share power
My views and values are better	My views and values are different

Task Assignment

Group One

Design a family center that reflects the following approaches to practice (from handout **[2-2]**):

1. Long-term thinking
2. The aspirations of individuals with different social and economic status are similar. Only their degrees of access to resources differ.
3. Expecting much of program participants (families are seen as resources to the program)

Answer these questions:

1. What services would your center provide?
2. How would the services be provided?
3. How would decisions about the center be made?
4. How would each of you, as a staff person at the center, interact with the families?

Task Assignment

Group Two

Design a family center that reflects the following approaches to practice (from handout **[2-2]**):

1. Emphasis on the prevention of crisis
2. Families set norms and goals for themselves
3. Families and practitioners choose solutions for families together

Answer these questions:

1. What services would your center provide?
2. How would the services be provided?
3. How would decisions about the center be made?
4. How would each of you, as a staff person at the center, interact with the families?

Task Assignment

Group Three

Design a family center that reflects the following approaches to practice (from handout **[2-2]**):

1. Seeing the strengths of families
2. People have different kinds of knowledge
3. Program staff and families share power

Answer these questions:

1. What services would your center provide?
2. How would the services be provided?
3. How would decisions about the center be made?
4. How would each of you, as a staff person at the center, interact with the families?

Task Assignment

Group Four

Design a family center that reflects the following approaches to practice (from handout **[2-2]**):

1. Recognizes and affirms cultural differences
2. Staff's and families' views may be different
3. Recognizes family strengths

Answer these questions:

1. What services would your center provide?
2. How would the services be provided?
3. How would decisions about the center be made?
4. How would each of you, as a staff person at the center, interact with the families?

Module 3

Appreciating Diversity

Purpose

To begin the process of becoming culturally competent family support practitioners.

Goals

By the end of this half-day session, participants will:

- Be more aware of their own beliefs, values, and ways of thinking and behaving regarding race and culture
- KNOW how to develop strategies for dealing with differences
- Be able to interact more effectively and appropriately with the families they serve

AGENDA

		4 hours, 23 minutes
Activity	Icebreaker	30 minutes
Mini-Lecture	Introducing the Topic	5 minutes
Activity &Discussion	Defining Ourselves	1 hour, 15 minutes
Discussion	The Culture of Families	30 minutes
Break		15 minutes
Activity	Guidelines for Culturally Competent Practice	1 hour 30 minutes
Debriefing	Guidelines for Culturally Competent Practice	15 minutes
Mini-Lecture	Conclusion	3 minutes

Time required

1/2 day

Materials provided

Handouts

Materials needed

Easel, newsprint, markers, pencils or pens, tape, post-it notes, copies of handouts.

Trainer preparation

Review module, read recommended reading

ACTIVITY 3A

Icebreaker

30 minutes

Welcome the group to the training and introduce yourself. Inform participants that you would like them to introduce themselves also. Ask participants to take something out of their wallet, pocket, or purse that says something about them. Give them two or three minutes to find their objects. Then ask the participants to take turns introducing themselves, sharing their objects, and describing the objects' significance.

MINI-LECTURE 3B

Introducing the Topic

5 minutes

"... *We are about to begin exploring racial and cultural diversity, particularly as it relates to the face-to-face interaction between a service provider and a family.*

Many of you are probably familiar with the term "culturally competent." Before we begin, let me give you the definition that will provide the framework for this training. Eleanor Lynch and Marci Hanson, in their book Developing Cross-Cultural Competence, *write that cultural competence comes from: clarifying and becoming aware of your own values, assumptions, and biases; gathering and analyzing ethnographic information on the cultural communities in which the families you work with reside; examining each family's specific childrearing beliefs and practices; and learning and refining the skills you need to interact successfully across cultures.*

Examining our own roots will be the first stop on our journey toward increased cultural competence. This self-analysis is important because until we understand the impact of our own culture, language, and ethnicity on our attitudes, beliefs, values, and behaviors, we cannot fully appreciate the cultures of others. ..."

Defining Ourselves

3C ACTIVITY

1 hour, 15 minutes

Step 1.

Distribute the handout "The Plane Ride" [**3-1**] to each participant.

Step 2.

Read the story aloud as participants follow along silently:

Mark is on a plane going from Denver to Los Angeles. After Mark takes his seat, an elderly woman in the seat next to his turns to him and asks the following questions:

Who are you?

Where have you come from?

Where are you going?

What have you brought with you?

Mark replies, "Hi. I'm Mark Jackson. I live in Denver, but I'm on my way to L.A. to visit my sister. Actually, I didn't bring much because I'll only be there for a few days."

To Mark's surprise, his elderly neighbor merely stares silently at him, as if she has not heard him. Then, she repeats her four questions:

Who are you?

Where have you come from?

Where are you going?

What have you brought with you?

Mark repeats his answer, louder and slower this time. "I said," he replies as he leans towards her, "My name is Mark Jackson and I'm from Denver. I'm on my way to Los Angeles to visit my sister for a few days."

Again, the elderly woman is silent. Then, she finally replies, Mark, I may look old, but I'm not that *old! There's got to be more to you than that! Now—*

Who are you?

Where have you come from?

Where are you going?

And what have you brought with you?

Step 3.

After you read the story, ask participants,
How would *you* have responded to the elderly woman's four questions?

Step 4.

(15 minutes)

Instruct the participants to form pairs (or groups of three, if necessary). In these small groups, participants will take turns being the elderly passenger and the young traveler.

Step 5.

After each participant has had the opportunity to play each role, participants should form one large group. Write (or let a volunteer from the group write) each of the elderly woman's four questions at the top of a separate piece of newsprint.

Step 6.

Beginning with the first question, "Who are you?," ask each participant to share his or her response. (If the group is very large, you might want to ask for volunteers.) Write each response on the appropriate piece of newsprint. (Steps two through six should take approximately one hour.)

Step 7.

After participants' responses to all four questions have been shared with the larger group, ask the group to discuss the following:

Use these questions to guide a discussion based on the activity.

- Are there similarities among your responses?
- What common words, phrases, or themes appear?
- How did it feel to go through an exercise like this? Was it difficult? If so, why?

In this session, we have begun our journey toward cultural competence by taking a look within. What we learned in this session is that although we may not realize it, each of us has our own set of values and our own belief system. It is crucial *that we acknowledge this fact because we inevitably bring those values and belief systems with us when we interact with families.*

The Culture of Families

3D ACTIVITY

30 minutes

Step 1.

Ask each participant to think back to their family of origin. Then ask them to identify two things about their family and to write each of these items on a post-it note to be shared with the group:

On the first post-it note each participant should briefly describe something that was a ritual in their family (e.g., going on a picnic every Fourth of July, visiting grandmother every Thanksgiving, going to the same cottage every vacation, having a family reunion every year).

On the second post-it note each participant should write a descriptor of their family: one that most of their family members would feel truly describes their family or the way it operates, and which is not necessarily known by people outside the family circle. This could be a particular kind of behavior that was valued or not valued by the family, or a way family members interacted with or related to each other.

Step 2.

Label one sheet of newsprint "A Family Ritual" and another "My Family." Have the participants place their first post-it notes on the appropriate sheet.

Ask for volunteers to share one of their descriptors with the group. Let participants know that it is okay to not volunteer. After several of the trainees have shared, thank them and let them know that we will be coming back to this information throughout the day.

“… *With your help we have already begun to get a sense of the culture of families. Anthropologists describe culture as the sum total of ways of living built up by a group of human beings and transmitted from one generation to another. While this definition is most often applied to large groups of people, it can also be applied to an individual family. Families have values, customs, rules, and roles that determine how family members relate to the world, which they pass from one generation to the next.*

These descriptors convey a sense of the family culture each of you brings to this group. What do we know about you? [Read some of the items off the "A Family Ritual" chart.] One thing we can see is that if we conducted an activity together [identify one from "A Family Ritual], it would have different meanings for all of us—and might have special significance for at least one of us. This, would, of course, be true with any group of people. …”

BREAK 3E

15 minutes

ACTIVITY 3F

Guidelines for Culturally Competent Practice

1 hour, 30 minutes

Begin the session by reviewing the goals and lessons of the previous training.

“… *In this final session on race and culture, we will explore how the morning's material will impact your work with families in the future—particularly, your work with families who belong to different cultural groups than your own. How will you interact with families differently as a result of this training? What types of interventions or services will you recommend? How can you ensure that your recommendations will appropriately and effectively meet the needs of families? These are some of the questions that we will address during this session.* …”

Step 1.

Distribute the handout "Guidelines for Culturally Competent Practice: Discussion Questions" [**3-2**] to participants.

Step 2.

Read the following questions aloud as participants follow along silently:

- *Imagine that a parent with whom you work has a perspective on childrearing that contrasts starkly with yours. What do you do?*
- *Imagine that a family responds to your recommendation of an intervention with resistance or lack of follow-through. What do you do?*
- *How will your interaction with families of cultural groups different from your own change because of what you have learned in the previous sessions?*

Step 3.
(15 minutes)

Ask participants to reflect for a few minutes on these questions and to write their answers on the handout.

Step 4.
(30 minutes)

After participants have had an opportunity to reflect individually on these questions, ask them to count off from one to three or one to four to make teams. Explain that each group's first task is to come to consensus about what constitutes culturally competent practice; their second task is to write, as a group, their own set of "guidelines for culturally competent practice." (If space permits, participants should spread out into different rooms or outside.)

Step 5.
(20 minutes)

Call all the trainers together and ask that a member of each group report back to the large group. (Each report should take five minutes.) As each group reports, write their guidelines on a separate sheet of newsprint.

DEBRIEFING 3G

Guidelines for Culturally Competent Practice

15 minutes

Ask participants to look at and reflect on all of the guidelines suggested by their fellow participants. Then, pose the following questions to the group:

> “… *Instead of referring to these guidelines as "guidelines for culturally competent practice," could we simply call them "guidelines for family-supportive practice"? Why or why not?* …”

MINI LECTURE 3H

Conclusion

3 minutes

> “… *We have now completed our module on race and culture. Today we have explored our own beliefs and values; have examined the beliefs and values of others, and have created our own guidelines for culturally competent practice with families.*
>
> *We have learned that while it is crucial that we understand the beliefs and values of the cultures with which we work, we cannot lose sight of the fact that* ***all*** *families, regardless of race or culture, should be treated with respect and dignity. We must empower* all *families to make informed decisions in their lives and to access the resources that are crucial to their survival and growth.* …”

Distribute the three remaining handouts to participants.

RECOMMENDED READING

Chang, H. N., D. De La Rosa Salazar, and C. Leong. (1994) *Drawing Strength From Diversity: Effective Services for Youth and Families.* (San Francisco: California Tomorrow)

FRCA *Report, Culture and Family-Centered Practice.* (1995–1996) Vol. 14, No. 3–4. (Chicago, Family Resource Coalition of America)

Lynch, E. W., and M.J. Hanson, eds. (1992) *Developing Cross-Cultural Competence: A Guide for Working with Young Children and their Families.* (Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.)

Pinderhughes, E. (1989) *Understanding Race, Ethnicity, and Power: The Key to Efficacy in Clinical Practice.* (New York, Free Press)

Zinn, M. B. and S. Eitzen, eds. (1993) *Diversity in Families: Third Edition.* (New York, Harper Collins Publishers)

HANDOUTS INCLUDED

3-1 • The Plane Ride

3-2 • Guidelines for Culturally Competent Practice: Discussion Questions

3-3 • What Is Culture?

3-4 • What Is Cultural Competence?

3-5 • What Isn't Cultural Competence?

Adapted from questions posed by Raymond Reyes, of Gonzaga University, at the 1994 Family Resource Coalition of America national conference in Chicago, Illinois.

The Plane Ride

Mark is on a plane going from Denver to Los Angeles. After Mark takes his seat, an elderly woman in the seat next to his turns to him and asks the following questions:

Who are you?
Where have you come from?
Where are you going?
What have you brought with you?

Mark replies, "Hi. I'm Mark Jackson. I live in Denver, but I'm on my way to L.A. to visit my sister. Actually, I didn't bring much because I'll only be there for a few days." To Mark's surprise, his elderly neighbor merely stares silently at him, as if she has not heard him. Then, she repeats her four questions:

Who are you?
Where have you come from?
Where are you going?
What have you brought with you?

Mark repeats his answer, louder and slower this time. "I said," he replies as he leans towards her, "My name is Mark Jackson and I'm from Denver. I'm on my way to Los Angeles to visit my sister for a few days." Again, the elderly woman is silent. Then, she finally replies, "Mark, I may look old, but I'm not that old! There's got to be more to you than that! Now—

Who are you?
Where have you come from?
Where are you going?
And what have you brought with you?

Guidelines for Culturally Competent Practice

Discussion Questions

Imagine that a parent with whom you work has a perspective on childrearing that contrasts starkly with yours. What do you do?

Imagine that a family responds to your recommendation of an intervention with resistance or lack of follow-through. What do you do?

How will your interaction with families of cultural groups different from your own change because of what you have learned in the previous sessions?

Handout 3-3

From Cross, T. (1996) "What is cultural competence?" *FRCA Report* (14) 3–4.

What Is Culture?

Culture is the combination of thoughts, feelings, attitudes, material traits, and behaviors of a group of people. Each of these characteristics is manifested and shared by the group through symbols, communication, and social patterns. Webster's (1975) defines culture as "... the integrated pattern of human behavior that includes thought, speech, action; ... the customary beliefs, social forms, and material traits of a racial, religious, or social group."

Each culture's conventions satisfy basic human needs, from the perspective shared by that group of people. Some believe that people are "all the same underneath," yet a paradox exists: we are the same in our basic human needs, yet different in the ways in which we meet those needs. Culture is a complex system of learned and conditioned responses to our needs, and thus culture is one of the greatest resources for helping human service providers understand family needs and strengths.

In Short ...

People are largely the same in their basic human needs.

People differ in their conditioned and preferred ways of meeting those needs.

Handout 3-3

From Cross, T. (1996) "What is Cultural Competence?" *FRCA Report* (14) 3-4.

What Is Cultural Competence?

The word "culture" describes the integrated pattern of human behavior that includes actions, assumptions, values, reasoning, and communication of a racial, ethnic, religious, or social group. The word "competence" is "the state of being capable" (Webster's 1977) of functioning in a particular way. Therefore, culturally competent services are systems, agencies, and practitioners that have the capacity, skills, and knowledge to respond to the unique needs of populations whose cultures are different than that which might be called dominant or mainstream American.

Cultural competence can and should occur in both individuals and organizations. Cultural competence is a set of congruent behaviors, attitudes, structures, and policies that come together to work effectively in intercultural situations. That set of behaviors can be adopted and practiced by a solitary professional or an entire organization.

The culturally competent organization:

- values diversity,
- conducts cultural self assessments,
- is conscious of and manages the dynamics of difference,
- institutionalizes cultural knowledge, and
- adapts services to fit the cultural diversity of the community served.

Historically, our field has approached cultural competence as if it were primarily the responsibility of individual practitioners. Both development and delivery of culturally competent services were thought to hinge on the "sensitivity" of the providers. However, it is impossible for individuals to function successfully in isolation. Cultural competence depends on social institutions, organizations, agencies, and working groups, as well as individual professionals. Together, they equal a system that fosters effective work in cross-cultural situations. Cultural competence is the responsibility of the total system. This means our discussion must include the rules, regulations, infrastructure, and policies of agencies and institutions as well as the knowledge, skills, values, beliefs, and attitudes of individuals.

In Short ...

Cultural competence for the individual: The state of being capable of functioning effectively in the context of cultural differences.

Cultural competence for the organization: A set of congruent practice skills, attitudes, policies, and structures, that come together in a system or agency or among professionals and enable that system, that agency, or those professionals to work effectively in the context of cultural differences.

Handout 3-4

From Rodriguez, B. (1996) "What isn't cultural competence?" *FRCA Report* (14) 3–4.

What Isn't Cultural Competence?

Because the notion of a pluralistic society and world is confronting us so quickly and so tangibly, many are converging to classes, in-services, and special programs to learn all there is to know about "other cultures." There is a tendency to approach culture learning and related issues with the notion that in a few sessions, you can achieve cross-cultural "competence" or knowledge. Being culturally competent or aware does not mean knowing everything about every culture. It is, instead, respect for difference, eagerness to learn, and a willingness to accept that there are many ways of viewing the world.

In the workshops and training I facilitate, I am continually reminding and cautioning participants against overgeneralizing or characterizing cultural groups in a rigid, unidimensional, and static way. Culture is not:

- mere artifacts or materials used by people;
- a laundry list of behaviors, values, and facts;
- the pseudo-biological or pseudo-scientific trait of "race";
- the ideal and romantic heritage or experience of a people as seen through music, myths, dance, holidays, and folklore;
- stereotypic depictions of groups as seen in television, movies, newspapers, and other media;
- objects to be bought, sold, and distributed;
- generalized explanations about the behavior, emotions, or values of groups of people sometimes applied haphazardly to individuals; or
- higher class status derived from a knowledge of arts, manners, and literature valued by the dominant society.

Consequently, cultural competence or awareness is not becoming a member of another culture by a superficial, wholesale adoption of elements, such as customs, language, dress or behavior. Such shallow identification could be "manipulative and patronizing."[1] Abandoning one's own cultural identity and substituting another is not a form of respect, but rather a statement that culture can be easily shed. Culture encompasses values, attitudes, and beliefs, as well as customs and behaviors. While the latter can be readily adopted, the former require deeper and more fundamental awareness and changes. Additionally, cultural competence or awareness recognizes that individuals cannot be categorized into totally discrete groups and that much variability within cultural groups exists. Cultural identification is a complex matrix of intertwining cultural influences that frames individuals' identities and values and influences their choices and behavior in continually evolving and dynamic ways.

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[1] Green, J.W. (1982). *Cultural awareness in human services.* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall) p. 52.

Module 4

Building Relationships With Families

Purpose

To increase participants' abilities to build relationships with families.

Goals

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- Understand the nature of learning relationships
- Employ strategies for effectively joining with families and encouraging them to discover and exercise their power
- Practice communication skills that build empowering learning relationships with families

AGENDA

		4 hours, 15 minutes
Activity	Icebreaker	25 minutes
Mini-Lecture	Introducing the Topic	5 minutes
Activity	Learning Relationships	30 minutes
Break		15 minutes
Activity	Building Relationships—Setting Directions	2 hours
Activity	Effective Listening	1 hour

Time required

1/2 day

Materials provided

Handouts

Materials needed

Easel, newsprint, markers and tape, copies of handouts for participants

Trainer preparation

Review module, photocopy handouts; read recommended reading

ACTIVITY 4A

Icebreaker

25 minutes

Welcome the group to the training and introduce yourself. Ask participants to write down their responses to these questions:

1. What personal characteristic of yours will be most useful in your work with families?
2. What is one new idea, skill, or tool you tried in the last 30 days? How did it work?
3. What will/do you like most about working with families?

Ask participants to find partners. Ask them to:

- Share the three responses with their partners
- Be prepared, after 10 minutes, to introduce their partners to the group, giving the partner's name and greatest strength in no more than four sentences.

MINI-LECTURE 4B

Introducing the Topic

5 minutes

“ . . . *The heart of family support practice is the relationship between program staff and families. This relationship engages families as partners and helps them to develop their own capacities.*

Note that we use the word "practice." Practice suggests something that requires ongoing refinement, modification and learning. Working as partners with families is a vehicle through which we continually learn, discover, and develop our own potential. Rather than valuing solely the end result of our work, we value the chance to form strengthening relationships with families along the way.

During this session we will focus on how we can develop and nurture relationships. We will be introduced to the concept of "learning relationships" and will discuss five ways to build them with families. We will practice strategies for encouraging families to discover and exercise their power, and will learn how to listen effectively.

It is important to keep in mind during the training that by building relationships of trust, equality, and respect we will help families meet their needs while increasing their capacity to independently meet those needs. In building these relationships we will take risks, gain insight, and develop ourselves. . . . ”

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Learning Relationships

4C ACTIVITY

30 minutes

Step 1.

Let's take a few minutes to define the nature of our relationship with the families with whom we work. We often refer to it as "supportive," as "trusting," "equal" and "reciprocal." There is another adjective that captures something crucial about it, too: it is a learning *relationship. Both partners are learning, growing, and realizing important goals.*

Step 2.

Ask participants to close their eyes. Ask them to remember a relationship in which they learned something. Pause for several seconds after saying each of the following:

- Think of a time when you were moving toward your goals with the active assistance of a learning partner ...
- Think of what you produced together ...
- Think of how you related to one another and how you worked together ...
- Remember how it felt to achieve success ...
- Remember what your partner did ...

Now we will use the memories you called up to discuss the characteristics of learning relationships.

Step 3.

Have participants count off by three and form small groups. Ask that each group take five minutes to compile a list of characteristics that describe learning relationships.

- *How would people relate to one another in a learning relationship?*
- *What could be the results of such a relationship?*

Step 4.

After five minutes, call the group back together. Ask each of the holders of the lists to take turns reading without repeating ones that have already been shared. Ask for a volunteer to write the characteristics on a flip chart.

Characteristics:

If participants don't mention these characteristics, be sure to include them in the discussion.

Partners in learning relationships display:

- *mutual trust and respect*
- *nurturance and support*
- *reciprocity and equality*
- *honesty and open, direct communication*

In learning relationships, both partners:

- *increase their awareness*
- *expand their experience*
- *build knowledge and skills*
- *learn how to transfer new knowledge and skills to other situations*
- *learn, grow, and respect each other's effort*
- *experiment and take healthy risks*
- *challenge each other, but affirm each other's successes*
- *expect the best from each other*

Offer the learning relationship as the kind we want to create with the families we serve. Explain that our job is to become experts in creating learning relationships.

Step 5.

“ *These relationships may be different from those we normally have with families, and they are probably unlike the ones families traditionally encounter in the human- and social-service system. While it may take some adjustment for both parties, this kind of relationship holds great promise for sustained learning and growth—for families and for us.*

The remainder of this session will focus on skills and techniques we can use to build learning relationships. ”

4D BREAK

15 minutes

Building Relationships—Setting Directions

4E ACTIVITY

2 hours

Step 1.

Distribute "Anne's Story," "Frank and Sue's Story," and "Ways Practitioners Can Build on Strengths" [handouts **4-1** to **4-3**].

"...

Recall the characteristics we came up with earlier to describe the learning relationships we need to build with families. To achieve these characteristics, we must create opportunities for them to occur from our very first moments with a family.

During the initial period of relationship-building, we must be sure our strategies for engaging family members are empowering to them. We don't want to place ourselves in a position of unequal power and responsibility, a role that inevitably leads to negative outcomes for families and for us.

We do want to become aware of and sensitive to the unique strengths and challenges of each family. We want to understand and appreciate each family's ethnic and cultural life. We want to create the most supportive climate for building our relationship so families will want to engage in a process of growth and development with us.

..."

Step 2.

(30 minutes)

Form groups of four people. Have groups take their handouts with them to a space away from the other groups. The small groups should discuss and answer the following questions:

- With the best intentions, Anne has not developed an empowering relationship with Frank and Sue. In fact her relationship may actually be harmful to the family. Can you identify what the negative outcomes might be in this relationship?
- If you were Frank and Sue, how would you want Anne to work with you?
- Using the information in your handouts as a guide, how would you change Anne's relationship with Frank and Sue?

Based on this discussion, have participants plan a 15-minute role-play that shows ways in which Anne can work with Sue and Frank in a positive and empowering manner. For groups of four the roles to be assigned are Anne, Sue, Frank and the narrator, who will introduce and summarize the role play and any other narrative the group would want. For groups of three, assign only the roles of Anne, Sue, and Frank.

As the groups work, circulate among them to answer questions.

Step 3.

Ask the small groups to take turns presenting their role plays. Allow approximately 30 minutes for each presentation and the discussion following it.

At the end of the role play presentations, allow a few minutes for full group discussion and for participant's to ask questions.

“ …

This is an area of our work where we will always be striving for greater effectiveness and comfort. It is part of our ongoing practice. The rest of the session will focus on some of the communication skills that help us build learning relationships with families.

” …

Effective Listening

4F ACTIVITY

Step 1.

1 hour

Distribute handouts [**4-4** to **4-6**]. Look at these briefly with the group.

Good listening is the basis for understanding the messages others send us. When we listen well, we pay attention to the verbal and nonverbal messages people send. We respond in such a way as to demonstrate that we have in fact heard the speaker. We reflect—as an accurate mirror might—both the content of the speaker's message and the feelings that person is conveying. We all know both how affirming it feels to have strong emotions acknowledged by the person listening to us and how helpful it can be when someone notices the difference between what we say and how we say it. In the act of listening, both parties in the communication reflect, paraphrase, question, clarify, and interpret each other's messages in an effort to make sure they understand each other.

Being a good listener can be difficult: all too often, we hear the first few words a person says and we're off—analyzing what they're saying, thinking about possible responses, rehearsing what we want to say, or interpreting what's being said in light of our own experience and ideas. We stop attending to what the speaker is saying. Suddenly we're no longer present in the exchange. We lose the ability to listen, and we forgo an opportunity to learn.

Step 2.

During this activity you will demonstrate effective listening, so it is very important that you feel comfortable doing so. Practice your skills with a partner prior to the training if you need to feel more confident or just to brush up. Listening is a skill we can improve continually, and we have hundreds of opportunities to practice it every day.

Explain that you are going to demonstrate less effective and more effective listening techniques. Ask for a volunteer to come up and describe how he or she thinks the day is going.

Demonstration 1:

Tell the group you are going to demonstrate ineffective listening by saying out loud the thoughts you have running through your head. As the volunteer begins to talk, start rehearsing your response out loud as he or she continues to speak. You also might nod, say "uh-huh," or give some other indication that you're listening even though you aren't. This exchange needn't go on for more than a minute. When the speaker is done, respond as if you had been rehearsing your response rather than listening. Participants should find this demonstration pretty amusing.

Demonstration 2:

Ask the volunteer to speak again. This time, sit quietly, relax, and really attend to the speaker. Once he or she is finished, respond by paraphrasing what was said. This is often referred to as "reflective listening." Then ask the speaker if you have provided an accurate reflection of what he or she said. Listen to the speaker's response. Paraphrase this reply and inquire whether you have this time reflected what he or she wanted to have clarified.

Step 3.

What did you see and hear me do in the second interview?

Summarize their responses, highlighting the manner in which you paid close attention to the speaker by reflecting what he or she said, by asking if your reflection was accurate, and by continuing to listen and reflect until the speaker acknowledges you have accurately understood. You may also ask the speaker in what ways he or she felt heard.

If we don't fully understand the first time around, we can always ask for additional information or listen more carefully. It is our responsibility as listeners to encourage speakers to correct us if we haven't understood clearly.

Step 4.

Tell participants they will now have the opportunity to practice listening skills. Ask each person to find a partner with whom they will take turns speaking and listening. Partners should face one another and be close enough to easily understand what is said. Their exchange should proceed in the following way:

- The speaking partner talks for a couple minutes about the most valuable part of today's training experience and how it will influence his or her future work. The other partner listens, but is not allowed to take notes.
- The listening partner reflects to the speaker what he or she heard and understood, then asks if this reflection is accurate.
- The speaker clarifies anything that was not fully understood.
- The listener again reflects and checks for accuracy.
- When the message is fully understood, the partners switch roles and repeat the process.

Step 5.

Summarize by asking the group for comments about the activity or effective listening. Encourage them to practice this important skill with each other during the rest of the session.

> “ …
>
> *Our relationships with families are the foundation upon which all of our work with families will be based. For some, building these relationships will be easy; for others, it may take some concentrated effort. But we can learn and refine our ability to build learning relationships as we continue working with families. Using the handouts from this training as guidelines, you may want to keep a journal of your experiences with families as you continue the growth that this training has begun.*
>
> … ”

RECOMMENDED READINGS

Bruner, C., M. Hagerup, J. Kinney, and K. Strand (1994) *Beyond the Buzzwords.* (Des Moines, Iowa: National Center for Service Integration).

Bennett, T., B. Lingerfelt, and D. Nelson (1990) *Developing Individualized Family Support Plans: A Training Manual.* (Cambridge, Mass.: Brookline Books).

HANDOUTS INCLUDED

4-1 • Anne's Story

4-2 • Frank and Sue's Story

4-3 • Ways Practitioners Can Build on Strengths

4-4 • Characteristics of Good Listening

4-5 • Roadblocks to Listening

4-6 • The Three Parts of Communication

Anne's Story

Anne has been working with the Miller family for the past six months. Sue Miller, the mother of three young children, originally came to the family center to seek help in getting the family enrolled in the public welfare financial assistance program. Her husband, Frank, has been unemployed for the past year. They have used up what savings they had, and Sue feels she can't go to work with three small children at home.

Sue is having a difficult time managing her large family on the small amount of money she receives from public welfare. This has placed her under a great deal of stress and she feels more tired and angry every day. She is concerned that she is losing her temper too often with her children and, at Anne's recommendation, has enrolled in a parenting class at the center.

Anne believes the parenting class will make Sue a better mother. Although she really likes Sue personally, Anne really doesn't approve of some of Sue's parenting methods and hopes the class will change that. Anne also believes that Frank, and his unwillingness to get a job, is the family's real problem. If he were employed, it would relieve a lot of Sue's stress. Anne met Frank recently at a social night at the center and she discussed her feelings about his unemployment with him. Frank appeared evasive to Anne during this conversation. She felt frustrated that Frank was not willing to discuss her ideas for his finding a job. Shortly after this conversation, Frank gathered his family and left the center even though the event was just beginning. Anne is beginning to feel she will not be able to help this family.

Frank and Sue's Story

Frank and Sue had a very good relationship until a year ago when the local auto parts plant closed and Frank lost his job as line supervisor. Although the family wasn't wealthy, Frank made a good enough living to allow Sue to stay home with their three young children. Evenings after work, and on the weekends, Frank would help with household work and spend time playing with the children.

Frank spent eight months trying to find a new job. Although he could find some work, it would not pay as well as the job he lost. He was afraid that if he took one of these jobs, he would not make enough money to support the family and he would not have the time to look for something with better pay. At this point in time, Frank cannot find a solution to his problem; he feels "paralyzed" and unable to do anything. While he has been able to talk to Sue about his problems in the past, he now feels guilty about doing so. He feels it will add to the stress Sue is experiencing trying to handle the household with so little money. He is feeling more and more depressed and believes he is letting his family down.

Sue wanted to stay at home to raise the children. She and Frank enjoyed being parents. Parenting, however, has not been so enjoyable since Frank lost his job and they had to go on public welfare. Sue spends most of her time trying to balance the family budget. She has begun to doubt that she is as good a mother as she once thought she was. This is why she agreed to take the parenting class Anne told her about. The class isn't very helpful. She has a hard time concentrating in the class because she is so tired, and is usually worried about how she will make the next rent payment or if she can skip paying the electric bill this month so she can buy the kids school clothes. She is also beginning to feel a strain in her relationship with Frank. She knows Anne thinks Frank is not looking hard enough for a job, and perhaps she is right. Since his talk with Anne the other night, Frank refuses to go back to the center. Sue, however, is depending more and more on Anne to help solve her family's problems.

Handout 4-3

Adapted from Bruner, C., M. Hagerup, J. Kinney, and K. Strand (1994) *Beyond the Buzzwords.* (Des Moines, Iowa: National Center for Service Integration).

Ways Practitioners Can Build On Strengths

- Identify family member's inner and external resources and strengths
- Engage the family's hope and existing motivation for change
- Utilize family member's resources and strengths in planning for change
- Describe problems in terms of specific needs and goals, rather than labels that define the whole person as inadequate
- Look for areas or situations in which family members are functioning well
- Reflect family members' strengths in defining goals, increasing or drawing upon positive behaviors, attitudes, and beliefs
- Help family members see how strengths interact with the potential to reach goals

Handout 4-4

From Bennett, T., B. Lingerfelt, and D. Nelson (1990) *Developing Individualized Family Support Plans: A Training Manual.* (Cambridge, Mass.: Brookline Books)

Characteristics of Good Listening

- Give the other an opportunity to talk
- Establish an environment where the other person feels comfortable speaking
- Demonstrate interest by asking appropriate questions
- Lead the other to talk
- Show interest through your body language
- Attend to content, not just the delivery of the message
- Listen to the complete message
- Listen for the main idea
- Identify areas of common experience and agreement
- Practice listening

Handout 4-5

From Bennett, T., B. Lingerfelt, and D. Nelson (1990) *Developing Individualized Family Support Plans: A Training Manual.* (Cambridge, Mass.: Brookline Books)

Roadblocks to Good Listening

- **Comparing** what the speaker says to him or herself or to others
- **Rehearsing** what you will say in response to the speaker
- **Mind-reading** what the speaker is really feeling or thinking
- **Judging** the merits of what the speaker says or how it is said
- **Advising**: Providing solutions without being asked
- **Diverting**: Changing the subject, distracting the speaker from the topic
- **Being right**: Leaving no room for yourself to listen to the other's perspective
- **Placating**: Agreeing with the speaker without being involved in what is said

The Three Parts of Communication

1. Listening or watching. 2. Responding to message (a) reflect content (b) reflect feeling (c) reflect content and feeling.	Also known as active listening or reflective listening. "It sounds like ... " "It seems like ... " "It looks like ... "
3. Giving your feeling.	Also known as "I-messages" "When you _____, then I feel _____."

It is not necessary or appropriate to use all three of these in every contact with your child or others. Sometimes only listening is called for, most often listening in combination with reflection of feeling expressed is appropriate, and on occasion, it is important to add your own feeling in response to words or behaviors of another.

Module 5

Home Visiting

Purpose

To understand home visiting as an effective family support strategy.

Goals

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- Describe the benefits and challenges of a home visiting program
- Define the role and tasks of the home visitor
- Identify some of the ethical issues involved in working with families
- Define ways to empower and support community-based family support staff working with families and young children in the context of the home environment

AGENDA

		8 hours
Activity	Icebreaker	15 minutes
Mini-Lecture	Introducing the Topic	5 minutes
Activity	Benefits and Challenges	50 minutes
Activity	Instructions for Role Plays	10 minutes
Break		15 minutes
Activity	Planning the Role Plays	1 hour
Activity	Scavenger Hunt	30 minutes
Lunch		1 hour
Activity	Presenting the Role Plays	40 minutes
Break		5 minutes
Activity	Presenting the Role Plays (cont'd.)	25 minutes
Break		15 minutes
Activity	Exploring Ethical Issues	1 hour, 30 minutes
Activity	Building Support Systems	50 minutes
Mini-Lecture	Conclusion	10 minutes

Time required

1 day

Materials provided

Handouts

Materials needed

Easel, newsprint, markers, and tape; copies of handouts for trainees; lists of objects to find in scavenger hunt; inexpensive first, second, and third-place prizes for scavenger hunt (e.g., candy bars, party hats, bubble gum, little wind-up toys)

Trainer preparation

Review this module, copy handouts, choose objects for scavenger hunt, prepare list of questions for "Building Support Systems" activity, read recommended reading

ACTIVITY 5A

Icebreaker

15 minutes

Welcome the group to the training and introduce yourself.

Point out that some in the group may already have experience making home visits. Ask them to think of their most interesting experience on a home visit. Ask those who are new to home visiting to think of one experience that they are anticipating.

Ask the trainees to introduce themselves and give their answers aloud as the trainer lists them on newsprint. The lists should be taped to the walls of the training room. Leave the lists up throughout the training.

MINI-LECTURE 5B

Introducing the Topic

5 minutes

"... *The idea of sending visitors into families' homes to provide information, health care, or other support services is not new. Home visiting has existed since Elizabethan times in England and since the late 1800s in the United States. Home visiting programs are more popular now than ever. In thousands of communities across the nation, home visiting is a way to serve families in distress, and families participating in health, school readiness, or social support programs. Home visiting assists families in giving every child the best possible start in life.*

Home visiting is not a service in and of itself, but rather is a strategy for service delivery. There is tremendous diversity among home visiting programs in both their structure and their goals. Programs differ in population served, staff structure, intensity and duration of services, and strategies used during a home visit. It is important to understand that it is difficult to operate a home visiting program in isolation. Most programs are and should be housed in agencies where home visiting is tied to other services for families. If other services are not in-house, strong community linkages are imperative to give families access to services that the home visitors do not provide.

Today we will evaluate the benefits and limitations of home visiting programs, take an in-depth look at the roles and tasks of home visitors, and discuss the importance of support systems for home visitors. ..."

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Home Visiting—Benefits and Challenges

5C ACTIVITY

50 minutes

Step 1.

Counting off by twos, break the group into dyads. (The size of the group may necessitate triads, or a combination of dyads and triads.)

Step 2.

Pass the "Home Visiting—Benefits and Challenges" handout [**5-1**] to trainees. Assign one of the "benefits" listed on the handout to each dyad. Ask them to discuss the following questions together for 10 minutes and then to report back to the whole group:

- How does this benefit affect a family receiving a home visit?
- How does this benefit affect my work as a home visitor?

Step 3.

After 10 minutes reassemble large group and have the dyads report on their discussions. Record the answers on newsprint and tape them to the walls of training room and leave them up throughout the training. Allow five minutes for the reports and any general discussion.

Step 4.

Repeat steps 1 to 3 listed above for the "challenges" listed on the handout, but introduce the following additional question for dyad discussion:

- As a home visitor, in what ways can I address this challenge or solve the problem it presents?

ACTIVITY 5D

Instructions for Role Plays

10 minutes

Explain that after the break the time will be used to plan a role play that the trainees will present after lunch.

For a group of 15 trainees, count off 1 to 5 to create three groups of five. The roles to be assigned for each group include: narrator, who introduces and concludes the role play, and provides whatever information the role players want provided in narrative form; two home visitors (while most home visitors visit alone, this is the most demanding role and the work should be shared); Ms. Wagner; and Alice. Assign each group a type of visit: first home visit, ongoing visit, and final visit. Distribute the handout "Case Studies" [**5-2**] (the group role playing the first home visit should get **only** "Case Study I"; the groups role playing the ongoing home visit and the final visit should get both "Case Study I" and "Case Study II") and "Home Visiting Tasks" [**5-3**]. Explain that the "Case Study" describes the circumstances of the family they will be visiting in their role play, and that the "Home Visit Tasks" describes what the role play visit should consist of.

If more people need to be added to the small groups, you can assign them the roles of Ed and Tom. If there are more than 20 trainees, ask for volunteers to play the roles, and the others can help to plan the role play but will not act it out.

Ask the trainees to sit in their groups and review their instructions for the role play and read through the Case Study. Ask the groups to decide where they will work to plan for their role play and to try to find a place that is comfortable and private. When they are done, answer any questions the groups might have and adjourn for lunch. You may want to suggest that the small groups eat lunch together.

BREAK 5E

15 minutes

ACTIVITY 5F

Planning the Role Plays

1 hour

Ask participants to proceed according to the morning's instructions.

It is important for the group members to take the lead and do their own work as they plan their role play. Move from group to group to answer questions and to give support and encouragement.

About an hour before the end of the planning session, check in with each group to make sure they have addressed all the tasks on the "Home Visit Tasks" handout and that the tasks are included in their role play.

Scavenger Hunt

5G ACTIVITY

30 minutes

While some trainees will be looking forward to presenting their role play, others will be anxious about doing it. This activity will help people "loosen up," and it will lay some groundwork for the closing activity.

Step 1.

Tell your three teams that they are going on a scavenger hunt. Give them a minimal set of rules (i.e., they must be back in half an hour, they must stay within certain physical boundaries, and they cannot sabotage other teams).

Step 2.

Provide them with identical lists of objects to obtain. It is best to include items that are feasible to obtain, but which may require either ingenuity or collaborative effort within the group to acquire (e.g., a 1978 penny, a clover leaf, a roll of bath tissue, a book on childcare, a red shoe).

➠ Be creative! Remember, the purpose of this activity is to get people to relax.

Step 3.

When the groups return, score them based on the number of items obtained and award the prizes.

5H LUNCH

1 hour

Presenting the Role Plays

5I ACTIVITY

40 minutes

If desired, allow 10 minutes at the beginning for the groups to review their role plays for presentation. Allow approximately 30 minutes for each of the first two presentations and the discussion following it. The discussion should focus on the following concepts:

- Do all trainees fully understand the tasks for this type of visit?
- Are there tasks that have not been discussed that would be useful in a home visit?
- What other ways could a task be completed, other than those presented in the role play?

Have the "First Visit" group present, then the "Ongoing Visit" group. Then take a 15-minute break. Be sure you thank each group after their presentation and compliment them on their work.

BREAK 5J

5 minutes

ACTIVITY (cont.)

25 minutes

Presenting the Role Plays

(cont'd.)

Allow approximately 25 minutes for the final role play, "Final Visit," and the discussion following it. Use the *above* questions to guide the discussion.

BREAK 5K

15 minutes

Exploring Ethical Issues

5L ACTIVITY

1 hour, 30 minutes

Step 1.

Review page one of the "Guidelines to Help Resolve Conflicts Between Values and Duties" (handout **[5-4]**, page 1) prior to beginning the activity, and perhaps provide examples for each. Ask the trainees to give you definitions of the word "ethics" (list whatever definitions you get on newsprint). Then read the following dictionary definitions:

- the discipline dealing with what is good and what is bad and with moral duty and obligation
- a set of moral principles or values

Ask people to give some examples of their values and to explain why they have these values (e.g., "I believe you should not harm other people because it's something I learned in church").

Explain to the group that there are many ethical questions that can arise during the life of a home visitor's relationship with a family.

“ . . .

During the next two hours we will be exploring the issue of ethics. The word "exploring" is key here, because we may not always end up in the same spot all the time. Different people have different values, and act upon these values in different ways and under different conditions.

. . . ”

Step 2.

Have the trainees return to their original small groups and distribute page two of the "Guidelines to Help Resolve Conflicts Between Values and Duties" (handout **[5-4]**, page 2). Explain that the Guide offers various scenarios and offers questions for the group to discuss for each one. Tell the groups they will have to report the results of their discussion in 30 minutes.

Step 3.

After the small group discussion call the trainees back to the large group and lead a discussion based on their reports. Be aware that this could be a very lively discussion, and that you will need to maintain a supportive and safe environment. (Have the group set some ground rules before starting the discussion if you think strong feelings may arise.) Allow 30 minutes for this discussion. Emphasize at the end that the group has not set out any rules of behavior, but that it is important for home visitors to be aware of the significance of ethical issues that will arise in their work.

It may be helpful to have some sample "ground rules" ready as a starting point.

ACTIVITY 5M

Building Support Systems

50 minutes

Step 1.

Ask the group to reflect on the experiences they have had in their small groups over the last two days—the planning for the role play, the scavenger hunt, performing the role plays, and the group discussions on ethics. Have each person write down the answers to the following questions (have the questions displayed on the flip chart). Inform the trainees that they will not need to share their answers with the group. Allow 20 minutes for this activity.

List one time when ...

- another group member gave you an idea
- another group member made you laugh
- another group member agreed with you
- another group member gave you support
- another group member gave you concrete help or assisted you in doing something
- you gave another group member an idea
- you made another group member laugh
- you agreed with another group member
- you gave another group member support
- you gave another group member concrete help or assisted them in doing something

Step 2.

Ask the trainees to reflect for a moment on how these interactions with their group members made them feel. Ask if anyone is willing to share their feelings. Explain to the trainees it may be useful to keep the list for future reflection because it shows a few of the benefits we receive and give in our relationships with other human beings.

> “... *A major challenge for home visitors is to create and find the support they need to do their work. The work can be very isolating; in most cases it is done alone, away from the natural support that staff can find in center-based programs. The intensity of the one-on-one relationship required by home visiting, and of dealing with families in critical situations can also lead to isolation.* ...”

Step 3.

To close this activity, ask the group to suggests ways in which their program can provide supports for them in their work, and in which ways they can work with each other or other program staff to get the support they need.

Conclusion

5N MINI-LECTURE

“ . . . 10 minutes

We have completed our training on homevisiting. We have discussed some of the benefits and challenges of home visiting programs, begun to define the role and tasks of a home vistor, and looked at some of the ethical issues involved in this kind ofwork with families. The very heart of home visiting is the relationship established between the home visitor and family members. As you continue your work as a home visitor remember that a relationship is reciprocal, and that there is much you will give to the families withwhom you work, and there is much you will receive.

. . . ”

Allow some time for final questions and answers.

RECOMMENDED READING

The David and Lucille Packard Foundation (1993) " The future of children series." *Home Visiting* 3 (3).

Melaville, A. and M. Blank (1991) *What It Takes: Structuring Interagency Partnerships to Connect Children and Families With Comprehensive Services.* (Washington, D.C.: Education and Human Services Consortium).

Powell, D. (1990) "Home visiting in the early years: policy and program design decisions." *Young Children* 45 (6).

Reamer, F. G. (1993) *Ethical Dilemmas in Social Service.* (New York: Columbia University Press).

Wasik, B., D. M. Bryant, and C. M. Lyons (1990) *Home Visiting: Procedures for Helping Families.* (Newbury Park, Calif.: Sage Publications).

HANDOUTS INCLUDED

5-1 • Home Visiting—Benefits and Challenges

5-2 • Case Studies I and II

5-3 • Home Visiting Tasks

5-4 • Small Group Discussion Guide
Guidelines to Help Resolve Conflicts Between Values and Duties

Handout 5-1

Home Visiting—Benefits and Challenges

Benefits

- Occurs in the family's home
- Affords opportunity to view child and caregiver in the environment in which they live
- Reaches families who otherwise might not receive services
- Connects families with other community services
- Fosters close, one-to-one relationships between visitor and family
- Is vital component in providing comprehensive services
- Is flexible

Challenges

- Diversity of needs of families cannot be addressed by home visiting alone
- Safety of home visitor may be a concern in certain communities
- Each home visit must be tailored to each family it serves
- Determining desirable outcomes upon which family, community, and program agree is a complex process
- Cultural characteristics of home visitors and families must be assessed and accommodated, especially if they are different from one another
- Home visitor can be isolated from other staff and services
- Community services to which visitor can refer family may be scarce

Handout 5-2 (page 1)

From Melaville, A. and M. Blank (1991) *What It Takes: Structuring Interagency Partnerships to Connect Children and Families With Comprehensive Services*. (Washington, D.C.: Education and Human Services Consortium).

Case Study I

First Visit Group

The click of the dead-bolt on the front door told Tom he was alone. His mother's job at the nursing home would keep her away until dark and, for now, he was grateful for the solitude. Another fight had erupted earlier that morning when Ed, his 17-year-old brother, had come home drunk again. Ed hadn't been going to school all semester, though his mother found out only when the school sent a notice that he had been expelled for truancy.

Angry and disappointed, Ms. Wagner told Ed that, if he wouldn't go to school, he had to get a job. He was sure that he could find something better, but finally settled for a fast-food job.

School was a touchy subject with Ms. Wagner these days. At work she was told she would be promoted from a nurse's aide to a medicine aide if she passed a course at the community college. She wanted the promotion, but she'd only finished the 10th grade, and her reading and writing skills were so rusty she was afraid to try college-level work. She felt locked in a corner and worried that Alice, Tom's older sister, was heading toward the same dead end.

When Alice had gotten pregnant she began to miss a lot of school and felt as though her teachers were treating her differently. Finally, she dropped out. Alice knew she should see a doctor, but dreaded going to the health clinic alone, so her mother took a day off from work—without pay—so she could help Alice get to the clinic and to the welfare department to sign up for assistance when the baby came. The welfare department gave Alice the name of an employment and training program in case she wanted to earn a high school equivalency diploma or get a job.

When Brandon, Alice's son, was born, he weighed less than three pounds. The doctors said he would probably have ongoing problems. He cried easily and was difficult to soothe; Alice seldom wanted to hold him. Ms. Wagner cut back to part-time work to help Alice manage. She lost her health insurance and some bills went unpaid, but what else could she do?

Several months later, a space opened up in the subsidized infant care center that a church member had told them about, allowing Alice to enroll in the employment and training program to which she had been referred.

Alice loved her high school equivalency and data processing classes, but on Wednesday afternoons her class schedule made it impossible to get to the day-care center before it closed. Finally, the center staff said she couldn't bring Brandon anymore. Alice missed nearly two weeks of class trying to find a baby-sitter, but no one wanted to watch an infant who needed so much attention. Eventually, Alice's place in the employment and training program was given to someone else. For months she seemed angry with everyone, especially Brandon.

At 7:30, Tom left for school, he thought about how he used to enjoy math. He wondered how it had gotten so complicated; now he was failing and dreaded being called on in class. Remembering the uncompleted homework stuffed into his knapsack, Tom winced at the thought of another lecture from Ms. Shaw, his math teacher.

Later that morning, Ms. Shaw corrected papers as her class worked at their desks. The results of Tom's pop quiz from the day before looked as though Tom still hadn't mastered the mechanics of dividing fractions. Didn't he know it was only going to get harder? She sighed, suspecting that he didn't get much reinforcement at home. The mother never came to school and hadn't made a peep when her older son had dropped out.

Handout 5-2 (page 2)

From Melaville, A. and M. Blank (1991) *What It Takes: Structuring Interagency Partnerships to Connect Children and Families With Comprehensive Services.* (Washington, D.C.: Education and Human Services Consortium).

Case Study II

Ongoing Visit Group

After several months, with the help of the home visitor, Alice found a day-care setting for Brandon in a family day-care home. The woman providing childcare was more than willing to take Brandon because she herself had given birth to premature infant, and understood that they needed special care. Alice has re-enrolled in her high school equivalency and data processing class.

Ed still is working his fast food job, but is beginning to think he needs to finish school or find some sort of training in order to become more employable. Four weeks ago he began attending Alcoholics Anonymous meetings, and so far he has remained sober.

Ms. Wagner is having real problems paying her bills, and is looking for some type of training or employment that will bring in more money and offer health care benefits. She reports to the home visitor that Tom's grades in school have dropped dramatically.

Final Visit Group

Two months ago, Alice received her high school equivalency degree and last week she began a new job in data processing. She is thinking about taking a parent education class on Saturdays to help her increase her parenting skills.

Ed is still sober, although he has not yet decided what he wants to do to get ahead. The home visitor referred Ms. Wagner to the Big Brothers program, and Tom now gets to spend time with his Big Brother, Mike. Mike spends a lot of his time helping Tom with his homework.

Because of Ms. Wagner's excellent work record, the nursing home rehired her in her previous position. She finally found the courage to attend the class she needed at the community college, and is looking forward to her promotion.

Home Visiting Tasks

First Home Visit—Engaging the Family

- Become acquainted with family members
- Review the purpose of your program and its goals
- Define your role as home visitor
- Define the roles of family members
- Understand and discuss family members' expectations
- Begin establishing rapport
- Schedule the next visit

Ongoing Visits—Working Together

- Focus on family's needs rather than your needs
- Encourage family members to make their own decisions
- Recheck original goals and gauge progress
- Avoid fostering unnecessary dependency; help families find resources for themselves
- Maintain a professional relationship
- Acknowledge success

Final Visit—Letting Go and Moving On

- Give family advance notice of date of final visit
- Review what has been accomplished
- Discuss the future and how to build upon the goals already achieved
- Help family members design a strategy for attaining future goals
- Help family transition to other community supports

Adapted from Reamer, F. G. (1993) *Ethical Dilemmas in Social Service*. (New York: Columbia University Press).

Small Group Discussion Guide

Each group should answer the following questions about how they would react to the situation described below:

- What do you do?
- Why do you do it? Based on what values?
- Is your answer supported by any of the "Guidelines to Help Resolve Conflicts Between Values and Duties"?

First Visit Group

You have a very good relationship with Anne and her husband of many years, Bill. Two months ago Bill lost his job and he is currently unemployed. In order to relieve some of the stress he is experiencing, he has started drinking and has beaten Anne several times while he was drunk. You finally had to take Anne to a battered women's shelter. Bill is despondent over this loss of his employment, self-esteem, and Anne. You feel there is the potential for suicide. He wants you to tell him where Anne is.

Ongoing Visit Group

Vicky, the mother of two young children, was recently released from prison and is on parole. Her children were very upset by the separation from their mother and are delighted to be reunited with her. It is apparent that the three share a great affection for one another. During your last visit, Vicky admitted to you that she occasionally is using drugs again—this was the problem that sent her to jail in the first place. Vicky's use of drugs also means she is in violation of her parole.

Final Visit Group

You have been working with Layla, the 16-year-old mother of Tess, who is just now turning two. Layla has very few social supports, she lives on welfare and stays home alone with Tess most of the time. You know that Layla was abused as a child. She has been very nurturing during Tess's infancy, but as Tess enters the "terrible two's" you begin to notice bruises on her face and neck. You are fairly certain that Layla has begun to abuse her child.

Small Group Discussion Guide

Guidelines to Help Resolve Conflicts Between Values and Duties

1. "Rules against basic harms to the necessary preconditions of action (such as life, health, food, shelter, mental equilibrium) take precedence over rules against harms, such as lying or revealing confidential information, or threats to additive goods, such as recreation, education, and wealth." (The essential well-being of a person is more important than following the rules.)

2. "An individual's right to basic well-being (the necessary preconditions of action) takes precedence over another individual's right to freedom." (The person is free to choose self-destructive behavior as long as that choice does not interfere with another person's essential well-being.)

3. "An individual's right to freedom takes precedence over his or her own right to basic well-being. If an informed client voluntarily chooses to take an action that could threaten himself, his freedom to do so takes precedence over his basic mental and physical well-being." (The person must be informed and aware of, and have an understanding of, the consequences of the action.)

4. "The obligation to obey laws, rules, and regulations to which one has voluntarily and freely consented ordinarily overrides one's right to engage voluntarily and freely in a manner which conflicts with these laws, rules and regulations." (If the home visitor agrees to follow the policies of the program that employs him or her and of the profession to which he or she belongs, the home visitor should follow those policies.)

5. "Individuals' (clients') rights to well-being may override laws, rules, regulations, and arrangements of voluntary associations in cases of conflict." (Rules can be broken in life-threatening situations or those that threaten essential well-being.)

Exploring Family Strengths and Developing Family Partnership Plans

Purpose

To produce an overview of family strengths and to understand how to set goals and develop action plans.

Goals

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- Discuss the purpose and importance of family strengths
- Demonstrate an understanding of assessment as an ongoing process
- Demonstrate an ability to set appropriate goals with families
- Develop action plans with families

AGENDA

PART ONE		2 hours, 35 minutes
Activity	Icebreaker	25 minutes
Mini-Lecture	Introducing the Topic	5 minutes
Mini-Lecture	Why Think About Family Strengths, Challenges, and Resources?	5 minutes
Activity	Where Have We Been?	40 minutes
Activity	Where We Are Now	15 minutes
Break		15 minutes
Activity	Where We Want To Go	15 minutes
Activity	Role Play	35 minutes
Lunch		1 hour
PART TWO		3 hours, 15 minutes
Mini-Lecture	Goal Planning and Goal Setting	5 minutes
Activity	What Is Planning?	35 minutes
Lecture/Activity	Goal-Setting	45 minutes
Break		15 minutes
Discussion	Action Planning	45 minutes
Activity	Pulling It All Together	50 minutes

Time required

1 day

Materials provided

Handouts

Materials needed

Copies of handouts; easel, newsprint, markers, and tape; blank paper for timeline activity

Trainer preparation

Review module carefully (it contains a great deal of lecture and instructions), read recommended reading

ACTIVITY 6A

Icebreaker

25 minutes

Welcome the group to the training and introduce yourself.

Break the group into dyads. Have each member of the dyad spend about two minutes telling his or her partner the answers to the following questions:

- What is your favorite color? Why?
- What is your favorite food? Why?
- What is your favorite television program? Why?

Reconvene the large group and have each person introduce his or her partner by using an identifying personal characteristic that starts with the first letter of the partner's first name (e.g., Daring Dan, Bubbly Betty, Happy Harry, Great Gertie). The personal characteristic should be chosen based on the information you received from the partner. For example, Dan may be "Daring Dan" because his favorite color is red; he likes hot, spicy food; and his favorite television program is "NYPD Blue."

Once all the introductions have been made, inform group members that during this exercise they completed a very brief assessment of their partner. This was done by collecting information from the partner and using the information to come to some understanding about the partner's personality or characteristics.

MINI-LECTURE 6B

Introducing the Topic

5 minutes

Project overhead [**6-1**] and distribute as handouts.

The time we invest completing a thorough assessment with families gives our partnership with them tremendous power. Through a competent assessment process, families come to understand their situations in new ways. They gain an awareness of their strengths, a clarity about their own patterns that may have kept them from thriving or helped them to thrive, and a practical look at resources they can use and the freedom to go where they want to go. Good assessments are powerful strategies for empowerment—they create knowledge, and knowledge is power.

Assessment tools and processes should help the practitioner, too. They allow us to deepen our respect for the families we serve, help us identify if a family needs healing, and assist us in structuring the resources that will provide families with optimal opportunities to develop. For the rest of the day, we will be discussing the different types of assessment and looking at a number of tools used for family assessment.

... ”

Why Think About Family Strengths, Challenges, and Resources?

6C MINI-LECTURE

5 minutes

The goals of assessment are to help families identify:

- Where they have been
- Where they are now
- Where they want to go
- The strengths and barriers that affect how they get there

“ ...

From a systems or holistic point of view, assessment represents only one element of a process in which we engage, assess, set goals, plan, evaluate progress, and support a family or family member. When we ask an expectant family member assessment questions, such as—"If things were wonderful for you and your baby when you go home from the hospital, what would they be like? Why would this be wonderful? How much will it be like that and how much won't it? Why won't it be like this?"—we're asking questions that are part of a relationship, an assessment, a plan, and a form of support, all at once. When a family member says, "I don't know," balance may be the issue. We must always be aware of what is intrusive, what is not and how we will know.

... ”

ACTIVITY 6D

Where Have We Been: Timeline

40 minutes

This activity will help to focus on the first assessment task which is to help families to identify "Where have we been?"

Step 1.

“…

We are now going to turn to a tool that helps to clarify family history and its impact on the present. Timelines visually represent family history. Families have found completing them fun, non-threatening, and extremely informative.

The timeline creates a family chronology, a running account of significant family events. Timelines can be completed for the family as a whole, for each family member, or for a particular period of time.

Draw on newsprint to demonstrate as you explain this.

To construct a timeline, you simply draw a line across a sheet of paper, mark off yearly intervals and ask family members to note various events—good and bad—that seem significant to them. These might include marriages, births, deaths, accidents, jobs gains and losses, chronic or serious illnesses, untimely deaths or suicides, divorces, or other life-cycle transitions.

Timelines encourage family members to ask themselves:

- *What problems have we faced, how do we feel about them, and what strengths did we use to face them?*
- *What have been moments of success and celebration?*
- *How did we create those moments?*
- *What are the patterns of our lives?*

The timeline thus clarifies a person's understanding of a past or present problem, a recurring issue or a strength that can be built on now. By comparing individual timelines, family members can compare experiences and appreciate differences in how they see and do things now.

Once the time-line is completed, you and the family will have gathered a good deal of information about the strengths on which to build and the barriers that will need to be overcome.

…”

Step 2.

Demonstrate the timeline to the trainees by drawing a line that represents a period of time and marking some significant events in your own life or in your whole family's life along the timeline.

As you mark off each event, describe it, how it was dealt with, and whether you feel positively or negatively about it. If positive, draw a dot somewhere above the timeline (if very good, very high); if negative, draw a dot below the timeline (if very bad, very low, etc.).

At the end, connect the dots so a picture of events emerges. Point out any patterns you notice—periods of difficulties and accomplishments, recurring obstacles and solutions to challenges. Note how these long-term patterns might be strengths or might be barriers to overcome in achieving a goal you have set for yourself. (e.g., "I feel restless in my present job. I notice from the timeline that I seem to change jobs every 10 years. On the positive side, I can see that I love to learn new skills. On the negative side, I wish I didn't leave each position with so much conflict. I notice that I've been able to make other changes without much conflict. Maybe I can figure out what I did in those cases and transfer that skill to this area of my life.")

Step 3.

“ …

Join your small groups again. Together, look at the "Timeline" handout ***[6-2]*** *and discuss:*

- *What you know about this family from the timeline*

… ”

Allow groups a few minutes to discuss.

“ …

Now take turns helping each other construct a timeline for each member of your group—either for that person's whole family, or for him or her as an individual. End the process by asking your partner:

➡ Distribute blank pieces of paper for this.

- *What long-term patterns do you see, if any?*
- *What solutions and strengths can you call on from the past to help solve your present situation?*

➡ Write these questions on newsprint.

Spend 15 minutes on each person.

… ”

After 15 minutes, inform participants that it's time to switch roles. While trainees are working in groups, walk among them, answering questions.

ACTIVITY 6E

Where Are We Now: Recognizing Strengths and Re-Framing

15 minutes

Review handout **[6-3]** together as a group.

“ … *Helping families to identify and assess their strengths and resources, as well as their own barriers, is a key part of the assessment process. Assessment helps families to know more about themselves, to know more about what they want, and how they can get there.*

Identifying strengths is a key skill that may be difficult when you are not thinking in a new way. … ”

Split trainees into two groups. Give each group only one of the two "Case Studies" found in handout **[6-4]**. Ask each group to read the handout and identify as many of the family's strengths as they can and list them on flipchart paper.

After they have completed their lists, ask each group to hang their lists on the wall. Then review each list with the entire group.

What differences, if any, can they see in the two lists? Is one list of strengths longer than the other? Any other differences? How does each group feel about the other group's list?

After the discussion, give each group the alternate set of "notes" to review. Discuss the differences in language between the two sets of "notes," and the impact of these differences.

“ … *The purpose of this re-framing exercise was to show:*

- *The importance of new ways of thinking and*
- *The impact that language can have on how we view a family*

Re-framing helps to "normalize" behaviors and highlight strengths, rather than to highlight deficiencies. … ”

BREAK 6F

15 minutes

Where We Want to Go

6G ACTIVITY

15 minutes

This activity will focus on the third task, which is to help families answer the question, "Where do we want to go?"

Break the group up into three discussion groups, and give each group one of the following discussion topics:

1. Why do you need to explore dreams before you begin to set any goals?
2. Why would you tell someone your dream?
3. Brainstorm what you would want a listener to be like, what qualities they would have, and how they would be when you tell them your dream.

Ask each group to report the outcome of their discussions.

This exercise should show that—

A strong trusting relationship is an important factor in dream-telling, and therefore is an important factor in the assessment process as a whole.

Role Play

6H ACTIVITY

35 minutes

Break into pairs for a one-on-one role play exercise:

- One person will be a family member who has decided to go back to school
- One person will be the family support worker whose job is to help the family member to assess the situation

Allow each pair about ten minutes to conduct their assessment together.

At the end of this time, ask each "family support worker" to report what they learned through assessment of the family member's goal of going back to school.

Prompt the group by asking:

- *What kind of questions did you ask to get the information you wanted?*
- *What did you find out?*

Ask the "family member" to talk about how this process felt to them.

As you review the exercise, you may hear "family support workers" jumping to resources before a thorough assessment of this goal ("I can help you get into a nurse's aide training program that starts next month") and you may hear explorations of dreams ("Why do you think you would like to be a nurse's aide?") Use this as an opportunity to explore the difference and to review the idea that "the more you know as a family support worker, the more you can help; but always balance listening with questioning, and never badger."

Then, to encourage practice in asking assessment questions, (especially "why") and thus discourage planning without complete assessment, ask the pairs to reverse roles and do the assessment again. Repeat the reporting process. How was the process different this time?

LUNCH 6I

1 hour

MINI-LECTURE 6J

Goal Planning and Goal Setting

5 minutes

“ . . . *Our work in this half-day session, which continues our work on exploring family strengths earlier today, will focus on goal setting and planning. First we will take some time to define these terms in the context of our own lives and in that of a family support program. We will look at our experiences in setting goals for ourselves and creating a plan to accomplish those goals. Then we'll practice using some tools to set goals and make plans. You may find these tools useful in your work with families.*

But first we must ask, "Why is it important to plan? What is our goal in developing plans with families?" The goal of family support is to partner with families and assist them to identify their own strengths, to use those strengths to meet their own needs and goals, and to facilitate families' linkages to formal and informal resources for meeting their goals. This method differs from traditional ways of serving families in that it values process as much as it values outcomes. When we use a family-supportive approach, we do not simply deliver a service to a family. Rather, we build a trusting, respectful relationship with a family over time and help create an environment where parents are in control of their own lives; feel empowered to make good decisions for their children; and may ultimately be in a position to advocate for themselves, their families, and their communities. . . . ”

What Is Planning?

6K ACTIVITY

35 minutes

Step 1.

“ . . .

Take a moment to think about a plan you have created for yourself. What was the process you followed in setting your own goals? How did you develop a plan to achieve those goals? How did you know when you had accomplished your goals? What did you do if you hadn't reached your goals after completing the plan of action? How would you define planning and goal-setting?

. . . ”

Elicit responses from participants and record these on newsprint.

Step 2.

“ . . .

Now that we've thought for a few minutes about our own ways of planning and setting goals, let's think about how we currently do this or how we could do this in our work with families. Imagine a scenario in which a family support worker helps a parent to create a plan. Pretend that there is a hidden camera that is recording the interaction. Try to describe this interaction only in terms of what you see and hear the parent and the family support worker doing.

Workable, achievable goals are ones that can be described in "videotalk"; that is, they are results that could be documented on videotape—tangible, visible outcomes, versus those that require subjective judgments to tell whether they've been achieved. This limits the words used to outline goals to very specific descriptions of what one would see and hear if the goals were achieved. We used videotalk earlier when we described what we'd see or hear if a family support worker were setting goals and planning with families.

. . . ”

Write participants' responses on newsprint. Then review the following list of possible answers, asking participants to identify the similarities and differences between the two sets of answers. What was missing from participants' "videotapes"?

➠ Handout 6-5, pages 1–5, consists of these answers and the "Possible Answers" listed throughout the module. Distribute it at the conclusion of this training session.

What We See and Hear Successful Partners Doing:

- Using conversation or written tools to identify needs and realistic goals
- Identifying the positive effects of meeting these goals
- Identifying action steps and strategies needed to achieve goals
- Selecting specific action steps that are achievable over the short term

- Summarizing goals and plans orally and in writing
- Documenting plans that they make, level of effort, and outcomes of efforts to achieve goals
- Clarifying what activities are to be undertaken and why
- Agreeing about the roles and responsibilities they are to assume
- Identifying the connections between problems; building the capacity to respond to subsequent issues and needs

LECTURE 6L

15 minutes.

“ . . .

Goal Setting

The relationship we develop with an individual or family is a purposeful one that is intended to achieve certain goals. Its success or failure largely depends on the kinds of goals agreed on between family support worker and family members and the methods used to achieve them. This means that without clear goals, neither you nor the family knows when you have succeeded, and it will be difficult to evaluate the work you and the family are accomplishing.

Insoo Kim Berg (1994) *sets out six guidelines for setting workable goals that can help us become experts at goal-setting. Let's look at the handout called "Guidelines for Setting Workable Goals"* [**6-6**] *and interpret each guideline. After we evaluate the guidelines, we will engage in some exercises to begin setting workable goals ourselves.*

Number 1: The goal must be negotiated.

It is our task to find out what the family hopes to attain through their contact with us. To family support workers, goals are the actions or results that program participants say they want to happen in order for the worker/participant partnership to be successful—it is our job to help program participants name these actions and results.

Number 2: The goal must be small, simple, and realistically achievable.

Sometimes big problems can be solved with small, simple steps. Frequently we overlook obvious solutions, making problem solving more complicated than it has to be. The goals that we help family members negotiate should be realistically attainable to them given their circumstances. People need more successes, not failures, to gain confidence in themselves, and small successes enhance their chances for achieving larger ones.

Number 3: If the goal is to change some current problematic behavior, it must provide a positive alternative behavior.

The goal must be stated as a positive, measurable alternative rather than as an absence of negative, undesirable behavior. Notice the difference between "My goal is to stop being in debt" and "My goal is to put away 10 dollars a month for six months"; "My goal is to stop acting so angry with the kids" and "My goal is to find 10 minutes for myself between the time I get home and the time I have to pick up the kids." You can help people form positive alternatives by asking, "So what would you do instead of getting mad (or walking off, or quitting the program, etc.)?" Having to describe alternatives to undesirable behavior forces us to think out loud and make realistic choices. The more concrete and detailed a family's options are, the likelier positive change is.

Number 4: The goal must be important to the family member.

No one will change unless they want to; it is impossible to force someone to change. If at all possible, it is better for the family support worker to agree with what the program participant wants to change, rather than telling him or her what to change. Whatever the goals are, they must be meaningful to the participating family, and the family must view the achievement of the goals as having some beneficial and positive results.

Number 5: The goal must be described as a beginning of a new behavior, not an end of something.

People often describe their goals in an idealistic way, as if attaining them would make life trouble-free and dreamlike. This can be a positive sign that they see the possibility of life being different. We start with dreams but our task in Goal Planning is to break these down into small achievable steps. (If we don't, dreams may stay dreams.)

Therefore, family members may need assistance in shaping a goal that is small and concrete, and in recognizing their own progress toward that goal. One way to do this is to help family members identify the first sign that will tell them things are changing.

Number 6: Small steps along the way to achieving the main goal must be recognized and celebrated.

As participants complete steps toward achieving their goals, recognition plays a key role in helping them feel good about themselves and stay on track, and motivates them to risk taking subsequent steps. That's why the "Planning Worksheet" includes question number nine, an opportunity to identify and document progress toward goals. ... ”

ACTIVITY 6M

30 minutes

Step 1.

Distribute the handouts "Setting Our Own Goals" [**6-7**] and "Planning Worksheet" [**6-8**].

Let's try out videotalk with some of our own goals. With a partner, find a place to sit together and follow the steps described in the "Setting Our Own Goals" handout:

Ask your partner to describe a certain current situation in his or her life that your partner is working on or wants to work on (e.g., quitting smoking, getting out of debt, etc.). Then, using the planning worksheet, ask your partner to briefly summarize this situation in writing. This summary should describe your partner's problem or situation as it stands today: what your partner is doing, how he or she feels about it, what the problem or situation is. Take five to 10 minutes to do this part.

Ask your partner to describe this particular situation as he or she would like it to be, specifying in videotalk how things would be different. You might ask, "What do you see yourself doing differently? What different things do you hear yourself saying?"

If your partner describes things abstractly, saying things like "I will feel better, happy, relieved, etc.," help translate this into videotalk by asking, "What would I see you or others doing differently?" "How would what I heard you or others saying be different?" etc. Then ask your partner to briefly summarize in writing how things will be different. Take 10 minutes to do this.

Now change roles and repeat steps one and two.

Ask several pairs to share their videotalk goals. Ask the group whether they can see or hear what will be different after completion of the goal.

Step 2.

Return to your partner. Take turns describing a problematic behavior or situation, something you'd like to change. You may reiterate what you shared in the last exercise. Then help each other describe positive alternatives that are as concrete and measurable as possible. Try asking each other, "What would you do instead?"

Now check back to the planning worksheet to see if the goals you each wrote in response to question number two provide positive alternative behaviors to the current situation. If not, rewrite the goals.

Step 3.

Review your partner's goals with him or her. Ask your partner to identify the first sign that will indicate that things are changing, and have your partner note this in the margin or elsewhere on the planning worksheet. If he or she identifies something that seems too large or abstract, help whittle it down to make it small and achievable. When you are done with one partner, switch roles.

… ”

Ask several dyads to share their first signs that things will be different, and ask the whole group whether these seem achievable.

Step 4.

“ …

Let's review what we've done:

- *First we saw that the first and most important step in a family-supportive goal-setting process is to realize that the goal must be negotiated. We must first discover, with the family, what they hope to get out of the interaction with us.*
- *Second, the goal must be small, simple, and realistically achievable. We must take care to insure that it is possible for the family to meet the goal given their particular circumstances. We want to foster successes, however small.*
- *Third, if the goal is to change some current problematic behavior, it must provide a positive alternative behavior. It's not enough for us to say that we want to quit smoking. We must come up with a positive alternative, such as taking a long walk every day.*
- *Fourth, the goal must be important to the family or family member. We will never be successful if we force anyone to change their behavior.*
- *Fifth, we saw that the goal must be described as a beginning of a new behavior, not an end of something.*

Later we will explore the sixth and final guideline to setting workable goals.

… ”

6N BREAK

15 minutes

DISCUSSION 60

Action Planning

45 minutes

Step 1.

“ . . . *The distance between setting goals and achieving them is sometimes small and sometimes great. Whatever the distance, we must try to foresee the barriers we may encounter and to assess the resources upon which we will be able to draw to overcome those barriers. We spent the morning reviewing the various guidelines for setting goals. This afternoon we will identify resources and obstacles and will begin to plan a course of action for fulfilling goals.*

Step 2.

Let's brainstorm about the different kinds of barriers we encounter in pursuing goals and the resources we can use to overcome them. What are some examples of the physical, concrete barriers and resources? What kinds of barriers can people encounter, and what resources can they utilize to address those barriers? . . . ”

Examples of both barriers and resources tend to fit into these categories:

- Social (natural helpers, social supports, agency support)
- Skill-building (classes, workshops, apprenticeships)
- Cognitive (limiting vs. new, more adaptive and productive thought patterns)
- Family (family dynamics, family counseling)
- Spiritual (organized or individual belief systems)

Step 3.

“ . . . *Using questions three and four on the planning worksheet that we began earlier, work alone to list the related issues and barriers you may encounter in trying to achieve your goal and the resources available to you. For now, just list them. Problem solving comes later. Take 10 minutes to do this, then take another 10 minutes to share your lists with your partner. Take turns helping each other clarify or expand each other's lists.* . . . ”

Step 4.

“ . . . *Once we've listed related issues, barriers, and resources, we have two additional tasks that, when accomplished, will make it more possible* *to achieve our goals. The first is to identify real steps that we can take to prevent or overcome the barriers and to use and/or build on the resources we've identified. The second task is to make the first small steps of our plan real; that is, to break them down into who will accomplish them and how and when they will be accomplished.*

Take 10 or 15 minutes to answer questions six through eight on the planning worksheet. We will complete the final question later.

What was this experience like for you? Do you feel ready to begin achieving your goal? What, if anything, is missing from this process? In what context would it be appropriate to use this process in your work with families? … ”

Step 5.

“ …

Let's return to the "Guidelines for Setting Workable Goals" handout. Using guideline number six: As a group, let's brainstorm some of the ways family support workers can recognize and celebrate people's small steps along the way. … ”

Write these ideas on newsprint.

Step 6.

“ …

When people set goals and strategize action steps they are creating a plan for learning a new skill, a new thought pattern, a new relationship, or a more fully realized life. After a family member has developed an action plan, our job as family support workers is to provide support and resources while that person moves towards attaining his or her goals. … ”

Pulling It All Together

6P ACTIVITY

50 minutes

Step 1.

“ …

After a family has used these tools, they are ready to consider steps to bring about their vision. This is a time to integrate all the knowledge gathered from the assessment process into a statement of change.

By completing this activity, families focus on growth and development rather than crisis and chaos. Families will still have problems, but they will understand them in a fuller context; will have identified the strengths they can call on to address those problems; and will begin a course of action that will allow them to put together the knowledge, skills, and attitudes they will need to reach the goals they've set for themselves. ... ”

Step 2.

Instruct participants to help each other complete the handout "Our Family's Strengths and Goals" [**6-9**].

Step 3.

Upon completion of the handout, lead a group discussion by asking the following questions:

“ ...

- *What was helpful about this last activity?*
- *What obstacles did you encounter?*

... ”

Step 4.

Conclude the session by reviewing the assessment tools that have been discussed and practiced.

“ ... *An assessment interview often looks like a conversation. When these conversations occur, you, as family support workers, need to:*

- *use your listening skills to acknowledge everyone's feelings and perceptions of the situation*
- *help the family identify their needs and resources*
- *create trust and a collaborative environment*
- *help identify, amplify and support family abilities, strengths and solutions*

RECOMMENDED READING

Bennett, T. (1990) *Developing Individualized Family Support Plans.* (Chicago: Family Resource Coalition of America)

Berg, I. K. (1994) *Family Based Services: A Solution-Focused Approach.* (New York: W. W. Norton)

Herr, T. and R. Halpern (1991) *Changing What Counts: Rethinking the Journey Out of Welfare.*

Holman, A. M. (1983) *Family Assessment: Tools for Understanding and Intervention.* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications)

Institute for Family Support and Development (1994) *A Measure of My Family's Well-Being.* (Iowa: Mid-Iowa Community Action, Inc.)

McGoldrick, M., and R. Gerson (1985) *Genograms in Family Assessment.* (New York: W. W. Norton)

HANDOUTS INCLUDED

6-1 • **Assessment**

6-2 • **Timeline**

6-3 • **Assessment Issues and Questions**

6-4 • **Case Study** (Versions One and Two)

6-5 • **Possible Answers to Discussion Questions:**
  Creating a Plan
  Pursuing a Goal: Barriers and Resources
  Recognizing Strengths and Skills in Linking to Community Resources
  Linking to Resources: What Referred Participants Need to Know
  Forming Links—Fostering Community

6-6 • **Guidelines for Setting Workable Goals**

6-7 • **Setting Our Own Goals**

6-8 • **Planning Worksheet**

6-9 • **Our Family's Strengths and Goals**

6-10 • **Envisioning Solutions (Optional)**

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Assessment

- A **relationship** occurs each time one person tells another his or her story or something he or she would like to see happen

- An **assessment** takes place as each party values or weighs the response in relation to a certain standard

- A **goal** is already suggested in what the answer reveals about what is not wonderful or sufficient

- A **plan** and **evaluation of progress** will be formed by the family member's sense of when and how things might be improved

- **Support**, finally, will result from a family member's perception that this question was asked by someone who was both capable and sympathetic, likely neither to impose nor to undervalue

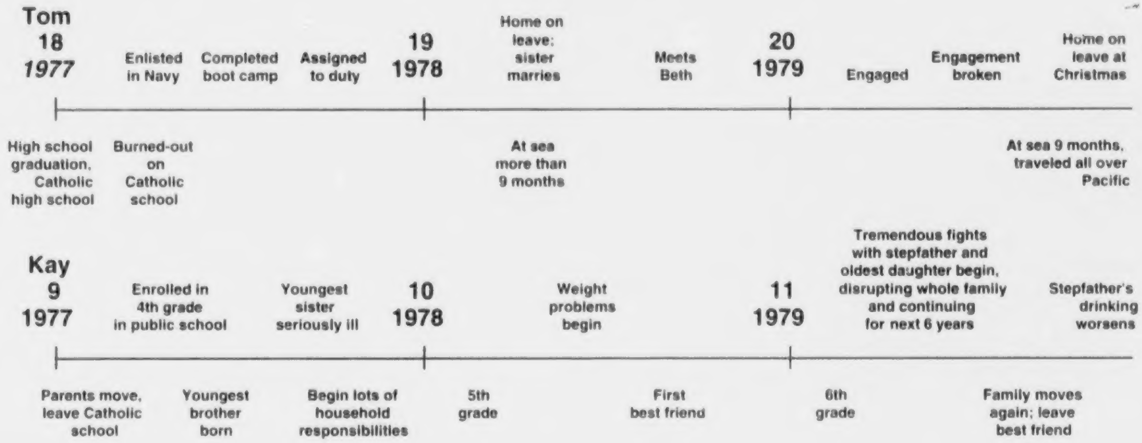
In the context of family support, assessment means all of these things. It is not so much a singular event as an ongoing opportunity for families and staff to gain insight into the family's current situation, to determine what changes, if any, family members might like to make, and to determine a course of action to make those changes possible.

Family support programs must continually balance their need to obtain information about families (which enables them to offer appropriate support) with the readiness and willingness of families to provide that information and accept the support that is offered.

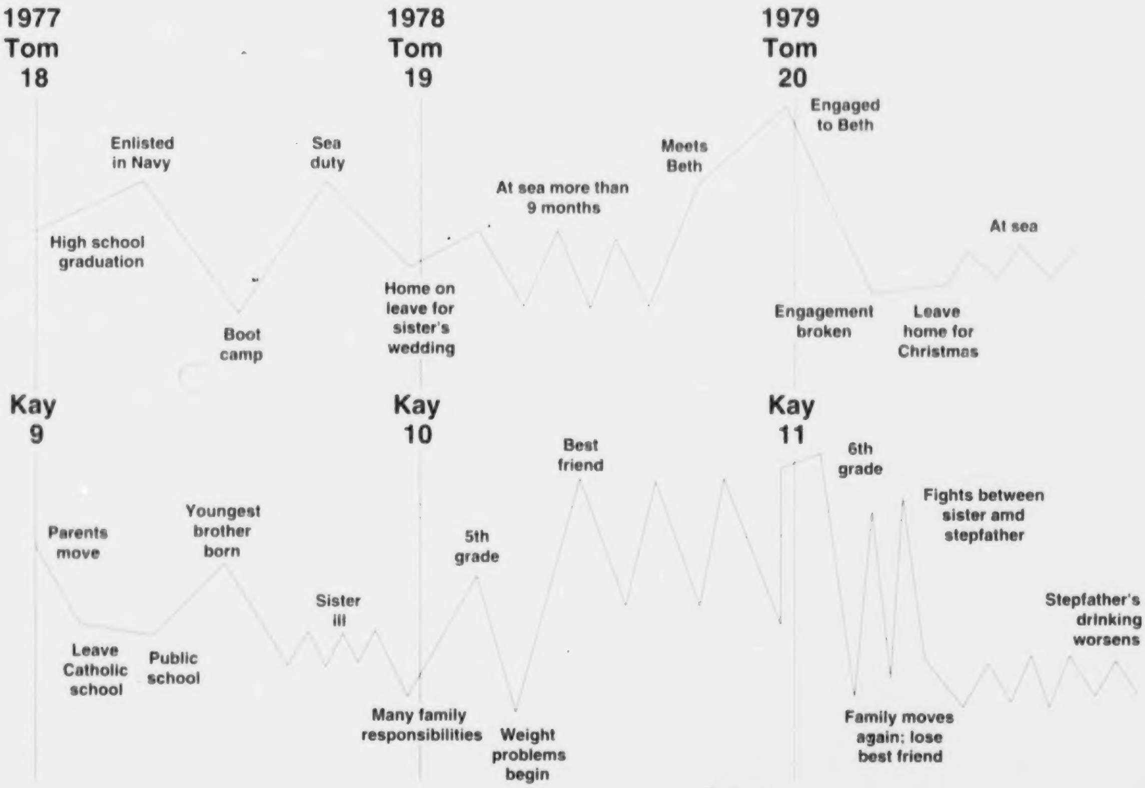
Handout 6-2

Timeline

Version One


Tom
18
1977
Enlisted in Navy
Completed boot camp
Assigned to duty
19
1978
Home on leave; sister marries
Meets Beth
20
1979
Engaged
Engagement broken
Home on leave at Christmas
High school graduation, Catholic high school
Burned-out on Catholic school
At sea more than 9 months
At sea 9 months, traveled all over Pacific
Kay
9
1977
Enrolled in 4th grade in public school
Youngest sister seriously ill
10
1978
Weight problems begin
11
1979
Tremendous fights with stepfather and oldest daughter begin, disrupting whole family and continuing for next 6 years
Stepfather's drinking worsens
Parents move, leave Catholic school
Youngest brother born
Begin lots of household responsibilities
5th grade
First best friend
6th grade
Family moves again; leave best friend

Version Two



Handout 6-3

Assessment Issues and Questions

Issues

- What are we assessing?
- Where people have been?
  - Personal history
  - Service history
- Where people are now
  - Strengths
  - Resources
- Where people want to go
  - Long-term goals
  - Short-term goals

Questions

- Why was this issue important to you then?
- What have you tried?
- What have you succeeded at?
- What are you good at?
- Why is this important to you now?
- How do you want to reach that goal?
- What did you have in mind?
- What would you like me to do?
- What can you do? Who else can help you?
- Why will this be important to you in the future?
- Where do you want to be in five years?

These questions help us to understand why people make certain choices or behave in certain ways. They help families to understand their strengths and their barriers.

Case Study

Jimmy and Gail live with their two-year-old daughter and Gail's 13-year-old niece, and are expecting another baby in two months. Both adults are 21 years old, and they have been together for four years. When Gail requested child development services for her daughter, she said, "She's smart, and I want her to stay that way." She also requested after-school care for her niece. Six months after her baby is born she'd like job training for herself.

Jimmy, who is working part-time, requested job training so he could get a better-paying job to better support his family.

Please list this family's strengths (on flip chart paper). Then, give the family a number between 0 and 10 for each category, and add the three numbers for a total score.

Parenting _______

Family Life _______

Commitment _______

TOTAL _______

Case Study

Gail is a single, female head of household in a multi-problem, low-income family. She has a two-year-old daughter, is seven months pregnant, and for the last four months has been caring for her 13-year-old, acting-out niece. Gail has requested job training, although she stated she wants to stay home with the newborn at least six months. Gail and her live-in boyfriend, Jimmy, are both 21 years old. Jimmy is underemployed and is looking for work.

Please list this family's strengths (on flip chart paper). Then, give the family a number between 0 and 10 for each category, and add the three numbers for a total score.

Parenting _______

Family Life _______

Commitment _______

TOTAL _______

Possible Answers to Discussion Questions

Creating a Plan

What we see and hear successful partners doing:

- Using conversation or written tools to identify needs and realistic goals
- Identifying the positive effects of meeting these goals
- Identifying action steps and strategies needed to achieve goals
- Selecting specific action steps that are achievable over the short term
- Summarizing goals and plans orally and in writing
- Documenting plans that they make and outcomes of efforts to achieve goals
- Clarifying what activities are to be undertaken and why
- Agreeing about the roles and responsibilities they are to assume
- Identifying the connections between problems; building the capacity to respond to subsequent issues and needs

Possible Answers to Discussion Questions

Pursuing a Goal: Barriers and Resources

- **Social**
  Natural helpers, social supports, agency support
- **Skill-building**
  Classes, workshops, apprenticeships
- **Cognitive**
  Limiting vs. new, more adaptive and productive thought patterns
- **Family**
  Family dynamics, family counseling
- **Spiritual**
  Organized or individual belief systems

Possible Answers to Discussion Questions

Recognizing Strengths and Skills in Linking to Community Resources

What we see and hear successful family support workers doing:

- Demonstrating that they have developed personal relationships and positive partnerships with staff of other agencies serving families
- Communicating the family support program's philosophy and goals to other agencies and to the larger community
- Recommending appropriate services for families and monitoring families' use of the services, and helping identify barriers to receiving appropriate support that families have encountered
- Developing strategies for overcoming families' barriers to utilizing resources
- Referring families or family members to other professionals when the situation warrants it, including referrals to protect family members from violence
- Recognizing the need for other professional interventions (including counseling for substance abuse and mental health) and effectively conveying that need to families so that they can access services
- Monitoring families' use of resources and its effect on progress toward goals
- Advocating for individuals and families when they need advocacy to achieve their goals or to receive services

Possible Answers to Discussion Questions

Linking to Resources: What Referred Participants Need to Know

Before utilizing a service provider, a program participant needs to know:

- Where it is—instructions for driving or taking public transportation
- Whom, specifically, to talk to there
- How long the initial appointment will take and what it might be like
- What to bring: financial records, birth certificates, driver's license, etc.
- How long it will take to get the service once the participant has applied
- What the participant will do if service isn't available
- Eligibility requirements
- Co-location: whether services the participant needs are located in the same building; whether they are provided at the same site as the referring organization
- What right of appeal the participant has (and to whom he or she should address it) if he or she needs to file a complaint about the service

Possible Answers to Discussion Questions

Forming Links—Fostering Community

Family support work requires helping families form links in the community:

- Our job involves fostering relationships in which community members learn from each other.
- We mentor individuals and connect program participants with others in the community who can be mentors in a variety of skill areas.
- We are knowledgeable about opportunities for families to volunteer in community activities.
- We provide opportunities for families to develop their skills by contributing to the family support program, starting at their current level (preparing meals, leading groups, serving on the board, planning programs, etc.).

Handout 6-6

Adapted by Wendy Deutelbaum Associates (1993) (Chicago, Ill.) from Berg, I. K. (1992) *Family-based services: A solution focused approach*; and Herr, T. and R. Halpern (1991) *Changing what counts: Rethinking the journey out of welfare*.

Guidelines for Setting Workable Goals

1. The goal must be negotiated.
2. The goal must be small, simple, and realistically achievable.
3. If the goal is to change some current problematic behavior, it must provide a positive alternative behavior.
4. The goal must be important to the family member.
5. The goal must be described as a beginning of a new behavior, not an end of something.
6. Small steps along the way to achieving the main goal must be recognized and celebrated.

Setting Our Own Goals

1. Ask your partner to describe a certain current situation that he or she is working on or wants to work on (e.g., quitting smoking, getting out of debt, etc.). Then, using the planning worksheet, ask your partner to briefly summarize this situation in writing. This summary should describe your partner's problem or situation as it stands today: what your partner is doing, how he or she feels about it, what the problem or situation is. Take five to 10 minutes to do this part.

2. Ask your partner to describe this particular situation as he or she would like it to be, specifying in videotalk how things would be different. You might ask, "What do you see yourself doing differently? What different things do you hear yourself saying?"

   If your partner describes things abstractly, saying things like, "I will feel better, happy, relieved, etc.," help translate this into videotalk by asking, "What would I see you or others doing differently?," "How would what I heard you or others saying be different?," etc. Then ask your partner to briefly summarize in writing how things will be different. Take 10 minutes to do this part.

3. Now change roles and repeat steps one and two.

Handout 6-8

Planning Worksheet

1. The situation as it is:

2. The situation as I'd like it to be—how things will be different (goals):

3. Related issues—other issues that complicate the problem; who else is involved and might contribute to the situation:

4. Barriers

5. Resources

6. Action steps for barriers—things I could do to eliminate or minimize them:

   Action steps for resources—things I could do to use and build on them:

7. Two or three promising action steps that will make things different (see item two), and allow me to change the barriers and utilize the resources (see items four and five):

8. For each action step:
   What resource preparation is needed?

   Who is responsible?

   What is the time frame for achieving first steps, next steps, and completion?

9. Progress I'm making toward my goals:

Handout 6-9 (page 1)

From McAfee, A. (1992) *Empowering families to move out of poverty.*

Our Family's Strengths and Goals

We feel good about our family because:

1. We stick together
2. We've overcome bad times
3. We can take care of ourselves
4. We're doing better than before

One year from now, we would like for our family to have achieved the following changes:

1. No more credit card debt
2. Kay in school getting ready for a good job
3. All kids doing well in school
4. Better money management

The biggest problems our family will face in making those changes are:

1. Figuring out how to make money go round
2. Managing everyone's schedules when Kay goes to school
3. Helping Tom Jr.
4.

We can use our family's strengths to attack those problems by:

1. Having everyone work on family budget
2. Having everyone pitch into meet family schedules, routines and chores
3. Helping Tom Jr.
4.

During the next month we will move forward by doing the following:

1. Have family development specialist bring budgeting information
2. Look into financial aid and school options
3. Talk to school counselor about Tom's school performance
4.

Our Family's Strengths and Goals

We feel good about our family because:

1.
2.
3.
4.

One year from now, we would like for our family to have achieved the following changes:

1.
2.
3.
4.

The biggest problems our family will face in making those changes are:

1.
2.
3.
4.

We can use our family's strengths to attack those problems by:

1.
2.
3.
4.

During the next month we will move forward by doing the following:

1.
2.
3.
4.

Optional: Handout 6-10 (page 1)

Adapted by Wendy Deutelbaum Associates (Chicago, Ill.) from quotations developed by the Brief Family Therapy Center and the Wisconsin Institute on Family Studies, Madison, Wis.

Questions to Help Families Envision Solutions

It is a simpler solution to repeat and build on the times when a problem doesn't occur than it is to create something entirely new.

I. Miracle

Questions to create an image or vision of what life will be like when the problem is solved, and to create hope for change

Pretend a miracle has happened: you wake up one day and your problem is solved.

What do you notice that tells you this miracle has occurred?

What is the first thing you do?

Having done that, what is the first change you notice about yourself?

What has to happen in order for you to do that more often?

Who has to do what in order for you do that more often?

How do you know the problem is really solved? How does your spouse know? Your boss? Your mother? etc.

II. Exception to the Problem

Questions to help family members discover their own strengths and problem-solving abilities and clarify that they did something to created exceptions to the problem

When do you not have that problem?

What is different about those times? What happens instead?

Who does what differently? You, family members, others ... ?

What will have to happen in order for that to situation to come about?

Who is most likely to make that happen? Who is least likely? Why?

How will you know the problem is really solved? How will your spouse know? Your boss? Your mother? etc.

III. Past Successes

Questions to help family members regain self-confidence and realize that they have the ability to shape their lives as they would like them to be

Have you ever faced something like this before? How did you deal with it then?

What will be a small sign that you are creating success with this again?

Why aren't things worse? How have you managed to keep things going?

What are you doing, and what are other family members doing, to keep it from getting worse?

How has that been helpful? How do you think family members see it as being helpful?

IV. Scaling

Questions to assess abstract things like hopefulness, self-esteem, progress (it is often helpful to specify a time period, such as "today," "during the past month," etc.)

Place yourself on a scale of one to ten for today, ten meaning you feel sure the problem can be solved, and one meaning you think it cannot be solved at all.

If other people in your family were here, where would you place yourself on the scale?

What will be different in your life when you move from (5, for example) to (6, for example)?

When you move from (5, for example) to (6, for example), what will others notice about you that is different?

What is the highest number you would have ever given yourself (or your ability to solve this problem?

What were you doing at the time? What was going on then?

What would it take to recreate those things now?

Module 7

Building Community

Purpose

To help participants understand the dynamics of community development and the mutual importance of the community and the family support program.

Goals

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- Discuss how the needs of the residents of a specific neighborhood affect family support program development and practice in that neighborhood
- Identify key community resources and opportunities to form partnerships with other community members
- Demonstrate community-organizing techniques
- Begin to develop an understanding of community development

AGENDA		7 hours, 20 minutes
Activity	Icebreaker	45 minutes
Mini-Lecture	Introducing the Topic	15 minutes
Activity	Internal Community	30 minutes
Activity	External Community	20 minutes
Break		10 minutes
Discussion	Defining "Community" and "Neighborhood"	10 minutes
Mini-Lecture	Defining Your Family Support Program's Community	20 minutes
Activity	Making a Community Portrait	55 minutes
Lunch		1 hour
Activity	The Puzzle of Community Resources	45 minutes
Break		10 minutes
Discussion	Community Development	15 minutes
Discussion	What Does Community Involvement Mean to Program Staff?	25 minutes
Discussion	"How Can I Help?"	30 minutes
Activity	Role Play	45 minutes
Mini-Lecture	Conclusion	5 minutes

Time required

1 day

Suggested group

Trainees should come in groups of at least four or five from the same program. Members of the PTA and other civic groups, as well as parents and others who may not be asked to speak often, also should be invited.

Materials provided

Handouts and overheads.

Materials needed

Copies of handouts; easel, newsprint, markers, tape; notepad or paper for each participant; construction paper, glue, building blocks; for each group of four or five: blank puzzle with uniform interchangeable parts from toy or education supply store and red, green, and blue markers OR four-inch squares of construction paper in those colors (see "Puzzle of Community Resources" activity); overhead projector

Trainer preparation

Review module, copy handouts, read recommended reading

ACTIVITY 7A

Icebreaker

45 minutes

1. Have everyone fold a piece of paper into four sections and place the answers to each of the following questions in the sections:

List three skills that you have.	*Which of your skills/hobbies might someone hire you to do?*
List up to three hobbies that you enjoy.	*List any community activities in which you are involved.*

2. Have everyone turn to their partner and briefly talk about their answers.

3. Have everyone come to the front of the room and present one answer to each question to the rest of the group. Hang the papers on the wall as this process continues.

4. Process:

   Is there a wide variety of skills in this room? More than you might have thought?

   How did it feel to answer those questions and to let people know what you're good at?

   How long do you think it might have taken you for you to reveal this kind of information if you hadn't been asked?

   The purpose of this opener is to illustrate what we believe to be one of the basic tenets of community-building: facilitating the discovery of peoples skills and talents. . .The next step is to create opportunities for people to showcase their skills. . .Can you think of some ideas for showcasing the skills we've heard today? (For example, putting together a band if there are a lot of musicians.)

Distribute handout [7-1], "Releasing Individual Capacities"; recommend book.

5. *These questions are based on* Building Communities From the Inside Out *by John Kretzman and John McKnight..*

MINI-LECTURE 7B

Introducing the Topic

15 minutes

During this training, we will answer the questions, "What is the role of community involvement in a family support program?" and "Why is community involvement important?" We will look at the importance of the community as the context of family support programs. Let's start by asking ourselves: Why is community involvement in developing and implementing a family support program vital to that program's success?

Possible Answers

- Community residents' involvement increases the likelihood that the program will reflect the true needs, concerns, and culture of the community.
- The more community residents participate in establishing and maintaining the program, the greater their sense of ownership of the program will be. This sense of ownership creates the level of commitment that is required to sustain and expand a family support program.
- Nurturing children and families is a basic tenet of family support. Because the health of children, the health of families, and the health of communities are interdependent, family support programs must meet the needs of communities as community members express them.

➨

If these aren't offered by participants, you may want to bring them up.

Internal Community

7C ACTIVITY

30 minutes

1. Ask everyone to group up according to the community center they are from.
2. Ask everyone to close their eyes and think of what a healthy community center is and how that might look.
3. Have the teams write out their ideals on newsprint and then take turns sharing their ideals with the rest of the group.

If not mentioned, be sure to mention constant communications, positive relationships, staff, families and community members working together to co-create the atmosphere and community center activities.

External Community—Journal Entry

7D ACTIVITY

❝ . . .

20 minutes

Now that we have looked at an example of a healthy internal community, let's think about the external community. Just as a welcoming atmosphere and healthy relationships are necessary within a family support program, they are vital to the larger community and the families in it.

Take a moment to think about your personal experiences with "community." Think about the place in which you grew up or the one in which you now live. Write a description of it, using your own sense *of what a "community" is. You will have about 10 minutes to write; then we will discuss what we've written.*

Allow trainees ten minutes to write, then ask them to share their ideas.

How did you describe your community? What did you include in your description—people, places, experiences?

Allow ten minutes for this discussion. Take notes on newsprint of ideas that surface frequently and those that are unique.

Keep these entries. As we continue our discussion and work to define "neighborhoods" and "communities," you will need to refer to what you have written.

BREAK 7E

10 minutes

DISCUSSION 7F

Defining "Community" and "Neighborhood"

10 minutes

As we learned from sharing our journal entries, concepts of "community" differ from person to person. Before we turn to the question, "What does community involvement imply for family support programs?" we need to define "community" and "neighborhood." Are these words interchangeable? Would they be defined differently in different places?

What are some ways of determining communities, and what are some examples?

If these aren't offered by participants, you may want to bring them up.

Possible Answers

- By geographic area—sometimes defined by established political boundaries (e.g., the city of Atlanta), sometimes defined by residents (e.g., the neighborhood of Sunset Park)
- By ethnicity (e.g., Latino) or religion (e.g., Muslim)
- By age (e.g., senior citizens, teenagers)
- By the resources available (e.g., a college, a family resource center)
- By common interests and concerns (e.g., mothers, artists)

- By shared political systems or leaders (e.g., Kenyans, the Democratic Party)
- By ecological environment (e.g., rural, urban, suburban)
- By the activities that take place (e.g., residential, commercial, industrial)
- By any combination of the above (e.g., mothers in the same public housing development, professionals in the same city)

What are the differences between a neighborhood and a community? How can they overlap?

Possible Answers

If these aren't offered by participants, you may want to bring them up.

- Community usually does not describe just a specific geographical area. Neighborhood is a specific geographic location that, for example, encompasses a certain number of city blocks.
- Community may describe a larger area that includes significant diversity in terms of people, industry, even geography. For example, a county may be considered a community. In that community there may be an urban area and rural areas.
- Community describes its members' interests—it describes a group of people who share a particular concern, background, or vision, e.g., the African American community, the Latino community, the women's community.
- Community connotes a sense of belonging. The women's community implies a shared experience that gives women a point of connection even if they have never met.
- Neighborhood and community can merge or overlap when a particular geographic region is inhabited by a group of people who share a particular concern, background, or vision. Examples of this might be an Irish Catholic neighborhood or a Polish neighborhood.

7G MINI-LECTURE

20 minutes

Defining Your Family Support Program's Community

There are a number of assets, resources, and issues that you will want to consider:

- PLACE: What does the community actually look like? *Examples:* Abandoned buildings, community gardens, empty lots.
- PEOPLE: Who is influential? Who has a following? *Examples:* Elected officials, institutional leaders, grass roots leaders, associations and groups.

- THINGS: What physical resources—materials, equipment, space and facilities—are available? *Examples:* A school swimming pool, community recreation hall, snow plow.
- RELATIONSHIPS: Historically, are there any relationships which have been particularly collaborative or divisive? *Examples:* A strong collaboration among programs for children, a stormy relationship between the Mayor and the school board.
- ISSUES: Are there some strong concerns that are shared by many community members? *Examples:* Clairton did a survey of residents—concern for lack of recreation came out strong in survey results and in all of the focus groups.
- IMAGES: How is the community perceived regionally? Perhaps more importantly, how does the community perceive that it is perceived regionally? How does the community see itself? *Examples:* Negative media image, people proud of their neighborhoods.
- EXPERTISE: What specific talents and skills are available as community resources? Examples: Retired/active/paraprofessional teachers, grant writers, nurses, care givers.
- ECONOMIC POWER
- POLITICAL POWER

ACTIVITY 7H

Making a Community Portrait From Snapshots—Introduction

5 minutes

“ . . . *Now, let's take all the pieces and put them together to assemble a full picture of the family support program's community. Using the construction paper, markers, glue, and/or building blocks, diagram the community. Be creative and be sure to incorporate the four areas we have discussed:*

1. *Place*
2. *People*
3. *Things*
4. *Relationships*
5. *Issues*
6. *Images*
7. *Expertise*
8. *Economic Power*
9. *Political Power*

. . . ”

Take a break for about five minutes and then take about 45 minutes to complete this task. Each team will then do a presentation of their community to the full group.

7I BREAK

5 minutes

Making a Community Portrait From Snapshots

(cont'd.)

7J ACTIVITY

45 minutes

Circulate throughout the room and look in on groups to see how they are progressing. If they have questions, try to answer them, but let them lead the work.

When groups have finished their projects, allow 15 minutes for teams to present the strengths and challenges of their family support program's community. Be sure they state their definition(s) of community and neighborhood in the process.

“ . . .

Let's summarize this morning's activities and outcomes. You have:

- *Defined community both personally and in terms of your family support program*
- *Identified similarities and differences between your personal definition of community and that of your family support program's community, and have considered the implications of this on your work*
- *Investigated (and hopefully internalized) the community's essential role in the development of the family support programs*
- *Modeled teamwork among staff and community residents*
- *Considered how a family support program can be an opportunity for individual families and the community at large to develop*

Now that we have illustrated our family support programs' communities, we will spend the afternoon looking at how the family center and its staff relate to and are successful within these communities.

. . . ”

7K LUNCH

1 hour

ACTIVITY 7L

The Puzzle of Community Resources: How to Connect With the Community

45 minutes

❝ ... *Sit with your map in front of you. Close your eyes. When you open your eyes again, look at your map in a new way—as a map of resources to build on.*

Using the chart developed by Carrie Harris, (Handout **[7-2]**, "Outlining Community Resources") *and the maps of your community you have created, begin to outline the different resources in your community.*

Choose three of the resources in your community and come up with a specific plan of how you could begin to collaborate together. What projects could you work on? How would this collaboration be beneficial to all involved? How could you approach this group? (For example, by attending their monthly meetings, going over and introducing yourself, etc.)

Outline specific action plans on flip chart. Be tough about specifics (e.g. How would you approach agency X about collaborating on project Y?)

Now that you have plotted the community's resources, think of how the family support program could work with them and how they could work with each other. Come up with at least three partnerships among different colors, including your program as a partner. For each partnership that you identify, list the partners on a piece of paper and think about some of the following things:

- *What are the different projects on which we could collaborate, or what are the different ways we could work together?*
- *How should this relationship be developed and maintained? Who should initiate it and keep it going?*
- *Is this relationship a true partnership or is it more of a cooperative agreement? If it is the former, how could this relationship be brought to a higher level of partnership?*
- *What are some possible barriers to this partnership and how would you handle them?*
- *What are the issues or needs that might arise from this partnership and how can these be developed into other partnerships? (e.g., if you are setting up a job training program because jobs are an identified need, will participants have bus fare to get there or childcare for young children? What partnerships might give participants access to these things?)* ... ❞

7M BREAK

10 minutes

Community Development—Introduction

7N DISCUSSION

15 minutes

In developing the "partnership puzzles," we defined a new way of "doing business" that implies change for you, individual families, and the community. But who decides what changes to make, and how do family support programs (and you as staff) facilitate change while working together with the rest of the community?

We are talking about the process of community development. Thinking about all that we have discussed today, how is development in the context of the family support program's community different from other kinds of community development efforts?

Possible Answers

➡ If these aren't offered by participants, you may want to bring them up.

- It is driven by the community residents and supported and assisted by family support staff.
- The family support program's environment can empower community residents to think creatively about how they would like their surroundings to be different and what positive changes they could make to that end.
- The family support program can be a catalyst for change and then can support change; it does not engage in "philanthropy," putting the community in the subordinate role of "supplicant." Family support is unique in its emphasis on developing parents as leaders.

How might the family support program advance the changes envisioned by the community?

Possible Answers

➡ If these aren't offered by participants, you may want to bring them up.

- Staff can offer the program site as a meeting place—providing the space, coffee, flip-chart—so that residents and community stakeholders can come together.
- Staff can share community assessment information or other available research with residents and can host a discussion to begin linking needs to solutions.
- Staff can brainstorm with residents about possible changes and mechanisms for achieving those changes.

- Access to training on skills that community identifies.
- Technical assistance to community groups.
- Serving as a resource that the community knows is available to them.

“… …” *As a resident of a family support program's community, how would you feel working in this new role as a partner?*

Possible Answers

- Nervous, at first, because I have never done this before
- In control of my own situation
- Like I'm accomplishing something
- More trusting of people who want to "help" because they are working with me and not for me

“… …” *Take about 15 minutes as a team to discuss how and what your particular community might want to see change. Be sure to make notes and create a "to-do" list of the three things you will do to begin the community development process once you are back in your community.*

DISCUSSION 70

What Does Community Involvement Mean to Family Support Program Staff?

25 minutes

“… *What do the community and community involvement mean to family support program staff? This question is the root of this training module and you should walk away today with some ideas and tools for answering it. Let's break it down into smaller questions:*

- *What is your role as a staff member of the community's family support program? How is this different from what you have done before? What strengths can you offer the community, and what barriers must you deal with if you are to be effective in your job?* (Discuss for approximately eight minutes.)
- *What are the implications of this new way of "doing business" on your work with families? How will it look and feel? How does this compare and contrast with your previous experience or your other methods of working with families?* (Discuss for approximately eight minutes.)

- *What resources are available to you in making these changes? How can you make the most of these resources? How will this new way of "doing business" affect your work with the community in general? How can family support staff help facilitate community organization and development as the community defines them?* (Discuss for approximately eight minutes.) … ❞

How Can I Help?

7P DISCUSSION

❝ … 30 minutes

As we take a look at this new way of "doing business," we must ask what it means to us individually. This exploration is imperative because change does not occur unless there are agents of change—in many ways, all of you are agents of change.

These changes involve two parallel processes: both the community as a whole and individual families are arenas for implementing a strengths approach (as opposed to a deficit approach) and developing partnerships. … ❞

Distribute the "How Can I Help?" handout [**7-3**]. Read it aloud or ask a volunteer to do so. Ask the rest of the group to follow along.

Of the following discussion questions, use the ones with which you feel most comfortable and that you think will work best with your group. If you feel that some of the questions are too personal to discuss right away, you may also write your own. You may choose to have trainees write responses initially and then see if they feel comfortable sharing with the group.

The goal of this discussion is to have trainees reflect on how they feel about the roles of "helper" and "helped" and to use these personal feelings to reach an understanding of how a "partnership" approach to their jobs will be beneficial to everyone.

Discussion Questions

- What are your initial reactions to the passage we just read?
- What are some examples of when you have been in the role of therapist, philanthropist, or helper? Did you feel good about this role? Do you know how the other person (the patient, supplicant, or helped) felt about their role? If so, did this impact or change your role in any way? How? If you didn't know how the other person felt, why do you think this was so?

- What are some examples of when you have been in the role of patient, supplicant, or helped? What was it like to be in this role? How did you view the therapist, philanthropist, or helper? If you were uncomfortable with this role, what could the other person have done differently to make you comfortable?
- Is there any way to employ the "separate self" model that Ram Das describes and not hinder the people we're supposed to assist? For example, is there a way to see and present yourself as "therapist" and not confine the program participant to the role of "patient"?
- Have you ever felt limited, dependent, helpless, or separate? What could a friend or other person have done to help you feel unlimited, independent, strong, and included? In the situation you are thinking of, what skills or supports might have helped you to bring yourself out of these difficult feelings?

Summarize this discussion by projecting the passage by the Australian Aboriginal woman overhead and reading aloud to the group. Give trainees copies to take with them [**7-4**].

> *If you have come here to help me,*
> *you are wasting your time. . . .*
> *But if you have come because*
> *your liberation is bound up with mine,*
> *then let us work together.*
>
> *This powerful statement gets to the bottom line of how your role as a family support staff member is different from that of "helper" or "service provider." Working from a strengths perspective, you, the community, and the families who participate in the program will have strengths to offer one another and barriers that will need to be addressed. Working in partnership, as a team, will increase success for all.*

Role Play—Family Support Worker/Community Resident

7Q ACTIVITY

45 minutes

Now we are going to put some of the ideas and concepts we have just discussed into practice by doing a brief role-playing exercise.

Hand out "Family Support Program Worker/Community Resident Role Play" worksheets I and II (handout [**7-5**]).

Find a partner—perhaps someone not on your team, someone you don't know.

Take a look at the first worksheet. It is separated into three columns: "Power Over," "Power For," and "Power With." Can you define these three kinds of power?

Give the group a couple minutes to review the sheet, then ask them for definitions for each of the three kinds of power, in their own words.

Possible Answers

- **Power Over**
  Dominating; authoritarian; not how anyone would want to be treated
- **Power For**
  Perhaps well-intentioned, but not the best way to help someone help themselves
- **Power With**
  Based on belief that we all have strengths and weaknesses; partnership among equals; optimal way to support people's helping themselves

Now let's test out these different types of power relationships. Take a look at the other sheet. Working with your partner, fill in your responses to the first three scenarios. One of you should play the family support worker role, and the other should play the community resident role. Then exchange roles and respond to the remaining three scenarios.

Give the pairs about 10 minutes. Move throughout the room checking progress, but allow the trainees to carry out the exercise on their own.

Once the exercise is completed, ask participants to share their responses. The following questions may be helpful in facilitating discussion. The goal of this exercise is to help trainees understand the way the roles feel within each type of power relationship and to help them internalize the value of the "power with" model.

Discussion Questions

- When you were the family support worker in the "power for" model, did you feel comfortable or uncomfortable? Have you ever been in this situation before? If so, did you feel the same way?
- (To the community resident in the "power for" model) Did you feel like the family support worker was trying to help you or trying to move you on?
- How did it feel to be in the "power with" situation? Did the conversation seem longer or more productive in this model?
- During the "power with" examples, how conscious were you of the roles you were playing?
- Can you think of times when the "power with" model might not be effective? Give an example and explain how you would handle it in another way.
- Can anyone else think of a way to employ the "power with" model in the situation we just discussed?

> *By now, you have a sense of how this new way of "doing business" would look and feel for both community residents and family support program staffs. These positive interactions based on partnership are likely to make the program itself different from other "service agencies." In fact, people will begin to see it less as a service agency and more as an enriching place where everyone gives and accesses supports.*
>
> *As a staff member of a family support program, how would you feel working in this collaborative role?*

Possible Answers

- It might be difficult at first because I have not worked in partnership with families and communities before.
- It would be exciting to take on community development as a team instead of feeling singularly responsible.

Conclusion

7R • MINI-LECTURE

“ . . . 5 minutes

This conversation could go on—and should go on—in your family support programs and their communities. I hope you now have a foundation to build on and some tools to use in building partnerships in your community. This afternoon you have:

- *Begun to think about and look at the personal and professional implications of working within a family support program*
- *Worked on understanding the possibilities of partnering with families*
- *Recognized that working as a partner with families is a process that runs parallel with partnering with other community stakeholders*
- *Recognized the possibilities for community development that occur if partnerships are developed among families and communities*

. . . ”

RECOMMENDED READING

Ram Das (1985) *How Can I Help?* (New York: Random House)

Guillery, J. (1992) *Needs Assessment: A Manual for Community Action.* (Vincente Publishers)

Harris, C., “Outlining Community Resources”

Kretzmann, J. and J. McKnight (1993) *Building Communities From the Inside Out: A Path for Finding and Mobilizing a Community's Assets.* (Evanston, IL: Center for Urban Affairs and Policy Research, Northwestern University)

HANDOUTS & OVERHEADS PROVIDED

7-1 • **Releasing Individual Capacities**

7-2 • **Outlining Community Resources**

7-3 • **How Can I Help?**

7-4 • **If You Have Come Here To Help Me**

7-5 • **Family Support Worker/ Community Resident Role Play**
Worksheet I
Worksheet II

Handout 7-1

From Kretzmann, J. and J. L. McKnight (1993) *Building Communities from the Inside Out: A Path Toward Finding and Mobilizing a Community's Assets.* (Evanston, Ill.: Center for Urban Affairs and Policy Research, Northwestern University)

Releasing Individual Capacities

- When you think about your skills, what three things do you do best?
- Which of all of your skills are good enough that other people would hire you to do them?
- Are there any skills you would like to teach?
- What skills would you most like to learn?

Handout 7-2

Outlining Community Resources

Organization	Control resources?	Have a following?	Decision-making power?	Play a role in family support?	Influential members?	How can we connect?

Developed by Carrie Harris, MSW, Mon Valley Initiative

How Can I Help?

by RamDass

Implicit in any model of who we think we are is a message to everyone about who they are. It's not as if there are any real secrets. If we're only seeing one part of the picture about ourselves, positive or negative, that's all we'll be able to make real to anybody else. Caught in the models of the separate self, then, we end up diminishing one another. The more you think of yourself as a "therapist," the more pressure there is on someone to be a "patient." The more you identify as a "philanthropist," the more compelled someone feels to be a "supplicant." The more you see yourself as a "helper," the more need for people to play the passive "helped." You're buying into, even juicing up, precisely what people who are suffering want to be rid of: limitation, dependency, helplessness, separateness. And that's happening largely as a result of self-image.

To identify with the separate self, however functional it may often be, is to make this model of reality more real for everyone else. How much is this helping, and how much is it hindering?

If You Have Come Here to Help Me

If you have come here to help me,
you are wasting your time. . . .
But if you have come because
your liberation is bound up with mine,
then let us work together.

—Anonymous,
Australian Aboriginal Woman

Family Support Worker/ Community Resident Role Play

Worksheet I

Power Over	**Power For**	**Power With**
Dominate and subordinate relationship. Person with less power has no real choice.	Dominate and subordinate relationship. Person with more power in "helping" position; temporary or permanent.*	Equal relationship. Role differentiation but co-learners.
Often power over = overt oppression	Often power for = covert oppression	Power with should = mutual liberation
Taking away the other's power	Denying or ignoring the other's power	Balancing power
Threaten, enforce, control	Diagnose, teach, take care of, fix	Negotiate, challenge, recognize, share, mutual support
Often the type of power used by the police, bosses, financial aid workers, military superiors, assistant principals	Often the type of power used by parent, teacher, social worker, therapist, doctor, clergy person	Often the type of power shared by musical group, block club, support group, recreational athletic team

* Temporary subordinates: children, the ill who will recover, the unemployed who will gain employment, students. Permanent subordinates in American society: people of color, women, poor people, physically and mentally handicapped persons, gays and lesbians, senior citizens.

Family Support Worker/ Community Resident Role Play

Worksheet II

Power Over	**Power For Response**	**Power With Response**
A home visitor visits a family in a substandard four-plex. The other three units house families with young children also. Many repairs should be made by the landlord.		
One person comes to the parent-education group and complains about practices at the Head Start Center. Other parents then voice the same concerns.		
The program wants to celebrate Halloween with a family party.		
A parent tells the family center worker that her child is not doing homework and is late for or misses school often.		
Several parents are concerned about their children's whereabouts after school.		
The program is interested in holding an informative and fun session in honor of the birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.		

Module 8

Supporting Families in Center-Based Programs

Purpose

To understand and become familiar with center-based strategies used to support families

Goals

By the end of this training session, participants will be able to:

- Understand how their past personal experience with families can be both a resource and a barrier in their work with families
- Describe different types of family structure
- Define the functions that families perform
- Plan center-based service strategies to support families

AGENDA

		5 hours, 5 minutes
Activity	Icebreaker	20 minutes
Mini-Lecture	Introducing the Topic	10 minutes
Activity	Categorization Exercise	30 minutes
Activity	The Work That Families Do	1 hour, 5 minutes
Break		15 minutes
Activity	Picture Your Program	30 minutes
Activity	Traits of a Healthy Family	1 hour
Activity	Designing Center-Based Services	1 hour, 15 minutes

Time required

1/2 day

Materials provided

Handouts

Materials needed

Blank name tags, large post-it notes, easel, newsprint, markers (at least five boxes)

Trainer preparation

Review module, photocopy handouts, read recommended reading

ACTIVITY 8A

Icebreaker

20 minutes

Welcome the group to the training and introduce yourself.

Distribute blank name tags to participants. Have each person take a few minutes to complete the following statements on his or her name tag:

- My name is ...
- I have a question about ...
- I can answer a question about ...

Encourage participants to meet and mix with as many people as possible and respond to the information on each other's name tags.

After 10 to 15 minutes, conclude the icebreaker by telling the trainees that in family support practice the relationship between staff and families is reciprocal—both families and staff will have both questions and answers on different subjects.

MINI-LECTURE 8B

Introducing the Topic

10 minutes

“ ...

Those of us who work with families have long known that the stereotype of a two-parent family supported by a father who goes off to work and a mother who stays home and cares for the children is not reality for the majority of families. But even those of us with a long history of working with families sometimes find it difficult to fully understand and work effectively with the broad range of real-life families—families who interact in so many different ways; adults who value such different behaviors from children.

Children are raised by one parent or two; by relatives or friends; by adolescents, grandparents, and caregivers of all ages in-between. Some live in one place while others move around almost constantly. Others have no place to live at all. Some speak English as their primary language; others speak another language. Some have access to a wealth of resources; others have scarce resources available to them. Some live in communities that support them; others live in communities that harm them.

Despite this great diversity in families and families' situations, for the most part, all families have the same job to do. Family support program staff's job is to help families get their work done.

In this session, we will explore our personal experiences with family, look at different family structures and functions, and plan ways to design service strategies that support families.

... ”

Categorization Exercise

8C ACTIVITY

30 minutes

Step 1.

Distribute the "Intake Interview" handout [**8-1**]. Ask participants to form small groups of four by counting off from one to four. Ask the groups to answer the following questions together after reading the handout:

- Do you agree with the intake worker's assessment of Ms. Wade?
- What may some of the causes of Ms. Wade's behavior be?
- How can you see Ms. Wade's behavior in a positive way? What are her strengths?

Allow groups to meet for 20 minutes, then have the participants return to the large group and share the results of their discussions. Write their answers on newsprint. If the following answers are not offered, introduce them:

- Ms. Wade handles her money well—she was able to pay her electric bill.
- Ms. Wade takes great pride in her family's appearance, and shops carefully to make certain she and her children don't look poor.
- Ms. Wade lives in a very dangerous neighborhood and she is in the habit of keeping her children nearby to keep them safe.
- Ms. Wade grew up in a family that did not believe in telling strangers their problems.
- Ms. Wade is yelling at the children because she is nervous and tired. She has done a terrific job handling the children and all the problems caused by the lack of electricity.
- Ms. Wade grew up in a family that did not believe in asking strangers for help.
- Ms. Wade has a speech impediment.
- Ms. Wade cannot afford to buy anything special for a potluck dinner.

Step 2.

Refer to "The Culture of Families" discussion in Module 3.

"... *Family support requires us to look at ourselves and those we serve in new ways. We need to be continually aware of how we categorize others and ourselves. When we place people in categories, we begin to move away from the essence of our practice: approaching families as unique and not generalizing their needs and characteristics. Family support work is non-stereotypical; it is based on providing individualized responses to particular people in particular situations. It requires us to learn about each other because we are unique individuals, not a part of some homogenous group of others.*

As I mentioned earlier, although families are diverse, there are certain functions that all families perform, and there are some traits that healthy families share. For the rest of the session we will discuss these functions and traits. ..."

ACTIVITY 8D

1 hour, 5 minutes

The Work That Families Do

Step 1.

Have participants return to their small groups. Tell them their assignment is to reach **consensus** on two things:

- A definition of family that is no longer than five sentences.
- A list of 10 functions that families must perform in order to provide a strong family life and to assure the safety and nurturance of family members.

Allow 20 minutes for this discussion. Then ask a recorder from each small group to write their group's definition of a family on one piece of newsprint and their list of 10 family functions on another and to tape these on the wall.

Step 2.

Tell participants that their next assignment will be to reach **consensus** as a group on a definition of family and a list of family functions. Ask them to walk around and look at other people's lists and definitions. They should take notes on what they would add to or subtract from their group's definition and list based on other groups' work. Allow 15 minutes.

Step 3.

Call the group together and lead a discussion to reach consensus on a definition of family and a list of family functions.

The "Family Functions" handout [**8-2**], which you should distribute at the close of this activity, offers one way to describe family functions. Trainees probably will list the functions individually, rather than grouped as they are on the handout (e.g., providing food and clothing, providing material goods, providing emotional support, passing on values, etc.). This is acceptable. If trainees leave out a crucial family function, introduce it into discussion, perhaps by paraphrasing and altering a function that was mentioned but which is incomplete or inaccurate.

Allow enough time for participants to explain, defend their definitions, and reach a consensus (approximately 15 minutes). Write the final definition of family and the list of family functions on newsprint; the group will refer to them later.

➡ In facilitating the discussion, remember that family functions are described in a number of different ways. While the language of these descriptions varies, however, the functions themselves rarely do.

Step 4.

Ask 10 volunteers to each list a different one of the 10 family functions on a separate piece of newsprint, and hang them in different parts of the training room. Ask participants to stand in front of the function that they feel is most important. Ask someone in the largest group to indicate why that function is the most important; ask someone in a small group the same question. Repeat this with two or three more functions, or until you run out of time.

➡ There are no right or wrong answers. The purpose of this activity is to reinforce participants' learning and help them retain the information.

8E BREAK

15 minutes

ACTIVITY 8F

Picture Your Program

30 minutes

Step 1.

Break the group into small groups of four. Give each group a piece of newsprint and a set of markers. Read aloud the list of family functions that the whole group created.

Step 2.

“… *With your small group, draw a picture of a house. This house represents a family support program or center. Draw rooms in the house. Label each room with a service that this center would offer in order to support families in the functions they must perform. In each room, write the name of a service and the family function or functions it supports.* …”

Step 3.

Have each small group present its picture and describe it to the large group.

“… *Today we explored the cultures in which different families operate, defined families and the functions they must perform, discussed what families do that makes them healthy, and envisioned family support programs that support families in doing these things. In our next day of training, we will discuss how we can support families through center-based services.* …”

8G ACTIVITY

Traits of A Healthy Family

1 hour

Step 1.

Disseminate the "Traits of a Healthy Family" handout [**8-3**]. *The information presented in this handout comes from the book* Traits of a Healthy Family *by Dolores Curren. She developed the list by sending questionnaires to 500 family professionals—teachers, clergy, pediatricians, social workers, counselors, and leaders of volunteer organizations. The traits presented here are the top 15 chosen by the professionals. There is remarkable congruence between Curren's findings and those of other researchers.*

The health of a family is based on the quality of the relationships of its members. Not all strong families are characterized by all 15 traits. Curren emphasizes that healthy families do have problems; but what sets them apart from unhealthy families is how family members work together to face their problems and seek solutions.

Step 2.

Assign one or two people, depending upon the size of the group, to each trait listed on the handout. Each person or dyad will have a few minutes to present two, three, or four examples of family behavior or activity that reflect the assigned trait. Some examples are:

Trait 1	Family meetings are held when important family decisions are made.
Trait 6	Everyone has household chores.
Trait 9	The family actively discourages the formation of coalitions and cliques within it.
Trait 11	There are designated places in the home to which family members can go for privacy.

After 20 minutes for preparation, call the group together and ask participants to present their examples. Also allow some time afterward for discussion and questions.

ACTIVITY 8H Designing Center-based Services

1 hour 15 minutes

Step 1.

Divide the group into four small groups. Disseminate the "Questions to Guide Center-based Service Design" handout [**8-4**] to all trainees. Give one "Task Sheet" [handouts **8-5** to **8-7**] to each small group.

Step 2.

“ …

This session's task is twofold. First, in your group, design a center-based service strategy specific to the scenario described by the tasksheet I've given you. Use the guide for service design as a resource and look back to the list of family functions we discussed in the last training day. Second, you will present your service component and will discuss it with the other groups: How might the different components fit together as a whole program serving children and families?

… ”

Ask groups to select a recorder. Then give them one hour to complete their task. Move from group to group to answer any questions the participants may have.

Step 3.

Reconvene the large group for presentations from the small groups. Allow 40 minutes for presentations and any questions and discussion.

Step 4.

Spend the rest of the session guiding the group in integrating these various service components into one program:

- What does a program look like when all of these services exist together?
- How do these service components work together?
- Are there barriers to services working together?
- Can a staff member play more than one role?
- How do teams of staff need to work together?
- How do families move from service to service?
- Are services "user-friendly"?

Step 5.

“ . . .

Services of center-based programs will differ in design based on the resources available to families in a particular community and the needs of the families using the program. It is important to have ways of receiving feedback from the families using the program. Parents participating in the program should fill out evaluations of its activities and services, should be encouraged to talk to staff about what they need from the program, and should sit on advisory committees or other structured planning groups when possible.

. . . ”

RECOMMENDED READING

Curren, D. (1983) *Traits of a Healthy Family.* (Minneapolis: Winston Press)

Dunst, C., C. Trivette, and A. Deal (1988) *Enabling and Empowering families: Principles and Guidelines for Practice.* (Cambridge: Brookline Books)

Lamb, M. (1982) *Nontraditional Families: Parenting and Child Development.* (Hillsdale, N.J.: L. Erlbaum Associates)

HANDOUTS INCLUDED

8-1 • Intake Interview

8-2 • Family Functions

8-3 • Traits of a Healthy Family

8-4 • Questions to Guide Center-based Service Design

8-5 • Task Sheet: Parent Education Work Group

8-6 • Task Sheet: Peer Support Work Group

8-7 • Task Sheet: Drop-In Program Work Group

Intake Interview

Ms. Wade has come to your family support program to get help with a problem she is having with the electric company. She had her electricity turned off for lack of payment. Ms. Wade, however, caught up on her payment, but the electric company still has not turned on her electricity. She and her two young children, five-year-old Sam and two-year-old Jill, have been living in their apartment without electricity for six weeks. Ms. Wade states that she is on welfare, and got behind in her electricity payments because she used the money to buy new clothes for the family.

At the start of the interview, the program's childcare worker offers to take the children to the childcare room. Ms. Wade declines the offer and keeps the children with her, even though they are bored and Ms. Wade has to yell at them often to keep them quiet.

The intake worker notices that Ms. Wade's speech is slurred. Suspecting a substance abuse problem, the worker asks Ms. Wade if there is any other way the program can help her. Ms. Wade states she only needs help with the electricity. The worker assures her that she will make a call on Ms. Wade's behalf to the electricity company. Making a last attempt to engage Ms. Wade in other program activities, the worker invites her to a family-night potluck dinner held at the program every Friday night. Ms. Wade declines the invitation and leaves the program with her children.

In her write-up of the interview, the intake worker indicates that Ms. Wade has a problem managing her money, has a problem deciding what money expenditures have priority, and may be misusing her welfare grant. She also writes that it is apparent that Ms. Wade has poor parenting skills, and does not know how to discipline her children in a constructive way. The worker characterizes Ms. Wade as cold, distrustful, and uninterested in getting help for herself and her children, and indicates that Ms. Wade has a drinking problem.

Handout 8-2

FAMILY FUNCTIONS

A family must provide:

Economic security

- Money for necessities
- Budgeting of financial resources
- Money for the future
- Stable income

Safe Physical Environment

- Adequate housing
- Safe neighborhood (protection)
- Adequate heat and water
- Well organized home with comfortable routines
- A home free of physical violence

Health Care

- Adequate and balanced diet
- Clean clothes for each season
- Availability of routine medical and dental care
- Availability of emergency medical and dental care

Childcare/Child Development

- Validation and promotion of self-esteem
- Educational opportunities
- Reinforcement of language, behavior, and social skills
- Transmission of values and culture

Emotional Support

- Positive intra-family relationships
- Positive relationships outside the family
- Companionship
- Sense of belonging to family or other group
- Opportunities to spend time with significant others

Socialization

- Mediation between family members and society
- Opportunities for recreational activities
- Accessibility to community/cultural affairs

Handout 8-3

From Curren, D. (1983) *Traits of a healthy family.* (*Minneapolis: Winston* Press)

Traits of a Healthy Family

1. The healthy family communicates and listens.
2. The healthy family affirms and supports.
3. The healthy family teaches respect for others.
4. The healthy family develops a sense of trust.
5. The healthy family has a sense of play and humor.
6. The healthy family shares responsibility.
7. The healthy family teaches right and wrong.
8. The healthy family has a strong sense of kinship and many traditions.
9. The healthy family has a balance of interaction.
10. The healthy family has a shared religious core.
11. The healthy family respects the privacy of one another.
12. The healthy family values service to others.
13. The healthy family fosters family conversation.
14. The healthy family shares leisure time.
15. The healthy family admits to problems and seeks help.

Questions to Guide Center-Based Service Design

- What is the purpose of this service?
- How do you know this is needed in your community?
- How will parents be involved in planning this service?
- Where is the service going to be provided? Why there?
- What time of day is the service going to be provided? Why then?
- Who are the staff?
- What kind of training will the staff need?
- What kind of childcare will be needed/arranged?
- How will the families get to the center?
- How will you collaborate with other centers that provide services?
- How will the service be evaluated?

Task Sheet

Parent Education Work Group

Your job is to develop a parent education program for a group of approximately 15 parents. All of them have four-year-old children. Eleven of the 15 are single parents and all of them have other children as well. The families have expressed an interest in an ongoing parent education program.

For the purpose of this task a parent education program is defined as a structured program of topical one-time workshops or topic-focused discussion or support groups covering issues such as child development and parenting skills.

Task Sheet

Peer Support Work Group

Your task is to develop a peer support group for women living in three generation homes. In this case we use the phrase "three-generation" to refer to households in which both the grandmother and the mother live together with the children.

For the purpose of this task, peer support groups are defined as groups in which the participants learn from and with each other. Part of the self-help approach, peer support groups are based on the belief that people have the capacity to help each other. The group setting taps this potential.

Task Sheet

Drop-In Program Work Group

Your task is to develop a drop-in program. Your program operates in a housing project in a large city. Stress levels of children and families are particularly high.

For the purpose of this task, drop-in programs are defined as those that provide support, resources, and information to parents through both structured and unstructured services. They offer opportunities for parents to socialize and informally share their experiences, information, and resources with other parents and with staff.

Working as a Team

Purpose

To understand and explore the notion that teamwork is central to successful family-supportive work with families.

Goals

- To provide a brief overview and definition of teams and teamwork
- To explore the team building-blocks (establishing trust, identifying the mission, discovering leadership, and establishing roles and responsibilities)
- To articulate and describe the stages of team development (forming, storming, norming, and performing)
- To develop a set of common protocols (a code of conduct) for both how team members will operate with each other and how the team will work with families
- To identify some of the obstacles to teamwork and opportunities for operating team rules
- To give participants an opportunity to begin designing team approaches to working with families

AGENDA

		7 hours, 10 minutes
Activity	Icebreaker	15 minutes
Mini-Lecture	Introducing the Topic	5 minutes
Activity	Defining Teams: Our Experience	20 minutes
Discussion	Defining Teams: The Research	30 minutes
Discussion	Not All Groups are Teams	30 minutes
Break		15 minutes
Mini-Lecture	Characteristics of Building Teams	30 minutes
Mini-Lecture & Activities	Characteristics: Revisited Part One: Mission Statement Part Two: Roles and Responsibilities Break (15 minutes) Part Three: Code of Conduct	2 hours, 15 minutes
Mini-Lecture	Stages of Team Development	5 minutes
Lunch		1 hour
Mini-Lecture	Putting the Information to Use	10 minutes
Activity	Construction Exercise	1 hour
Activity	Evaluation	15 minutes
Activity	Giving and Receiving Feedback	15 minutes
Discussion	Wrap-up	15 minutes

Time required

1 day

Materials provided

Handouts and overheads

Materials needed

Copies of handouts; balloons; easel, newsprint, markers, tape, bendable straws, scissors, note cards; copies of handouts for trainees; overhead projector and transparencies; five sets of role cards (see below)

Trainer preparation

Review module; use index cards to make three sets of "role cards" from the text provided on page A-13; photocopy handouts; read recommended reading.

ACTIVITY A

Icebreaker

15 minutes

Welcome the group to the training and introduce yourself.

Clear away chairs to form a large free space, or move to an open area of the room. Divide the group into smaller groups of about six people each. Distribute one blown-up balloon to each group. Have the members of each group form a circle and join hands. Tell participants that the object of the activity is to keep the balloon from touching the ground for as long as possible, *without letting go of any hands.* Allow the groups several "tries" if they are unable to keep the balloon going for very long. Let the activity proceed for about 10 minutes. Then reconvene the groups and discuss briefly what happened:

“ …

What happened in your group?

How did it feel when your balloon fell? What was it like when the balloon was kept going for awhile?

What did it take for the balloon to be kept in the air?

… ”

Try to encourage answers and comments about creativity, motivation, leadership, sense of group purpose and accomplishment, and celebrating success. The objective of this activity is to loosen the group up a bit and to get them thinking about what it means to work together.

MINI-LECTURE B

Introducing the Topic

5 minutes

“ …

Teams. Teamwork. These words evoke a range of responses in each of us. "Team" is a word and a concept so familiar to everyone, and yet we rarely take the time to study how teams work. Today, we will explore teams and teamwork and their relevance to your work with children and families. Teamwork is central to the success of the family support approach to working with families. In particular we will explore the advantages of working in teams; the ways to build high-performing, high-functioning teams; and the different roles and responsibilities, protocols, obstacles, and opportunities involved in teamwork.

Much research and work has been done around team building, team development, and team process, particularly within the business community in the 1980s. Large companies such as Xerox, Motorola, and Hewlett-Packard evaluated the quality of their performance to configure their staff and organizational strategies in order to meet the increasing competition and rising expectations of quality and performance. These businesses hit upon many lessons of growth, performance, and achievement that can inform the work that we do with children and families. Though our end goal differs from that of most businesses, the principles and premises of teamwork apply equally to family support.

Defining Teams

C [illegible] ACTIVITY

20 minutes

Part One: Our Personal Experience

I'd like you to think about the teams that you've been a part of. Identify one such team and list:

- *five characteristics that describe this team*
- *one thing you liked about the team*
- *one thing you disliked about the team*

Pair up with the person you're sitting next to and take about 10 minutes to share your experiences and your lists.

Bring the large group back together and without going person by person, ask the group to share the characteristics of the team. Make a list on newsprint of all of the responses. Possible answers include:

- It was a small group.
- We had a specific task.
- We worked together intensely.
- We knew what we had to do and we did it.
- The group fell apart after about three months.

What do these characteristics tell us about how we would define a "team?"

Elicit comments from the group, and have them try to come up with their own definition of a team.

DISCUSSION D

Defining Teams

(cont'd.)

30 minutes

Part Two: What the Research Tells Us

Now that we've thought about and discussed our own experiences on teams, let's look at the definition written by Jon Katzenbach and Douglas K. Smith (1993). The two partners at McKinsey & Company consulting group talked with hundreds of people on more than 50 different teams while writing their book The Wisdom of Teams. *Based on their research, they found that there is an "essential discipline" that makes teams work and distinguishes them from other working groups:*

A team is a small number of people with complementary skills who are committed to a common purpose, set of performance goals, and approach for which they hold themselves mutually accountable.

How does that definition compare to the one we came up with together? How it apply to family support programs?

In the discussion, explore and process differences and similarities between the group's definition and the one you read aloud. Elicit comments and discuss.

Let's pull some of the key elements out of Katzenbach & Smith's definition and put them in the context of a family support program:

- *Small number of people*
- *Complementary skills*
- *Common purpose*
- *Set of performance goals and approach*
- *Mutually accountable*

Give participants the handout, "The Elements of a Team: Discussion Questions" [**A-1**]. Divide the group into five small groups to talk about these elements as they relate to family support programs. Assign each group one element. Each group should have access to newsprint and markers and should appoint a recorder to take notes.

After 15 minutes, bring the participants back together and ask for a member from each group to report. Before they do this, re-read the definition to the whole group:

A team is a small number of people with complementary skills who are committed to a common purpose, set of performance goals, and approach for which they hold themselves mutually accountable.

Ask representatives to report in order:

- Small number of people
- Complementary skills
- Common purpose
- Set of performance goals and approach
- Mutually accountable

At the conclusion of each group's report, try to summarize the key points that came out of their discussion, placing these key points in the context of the family support program.

(For example: "Yes, you've made the point that in order to be manageable and productive a team must have a reasonable number of people. This increases the opportunity for relationships to be built among the team members and allows everyone a chance to speak and to contribute. You also made the point that in a family support program context, there are likely to be a number of different teams. For example, there might be a home-visitors team, but there also might be other teams that include a range of staff that perform different functions.")

After each representative has reported, ask the group to review the definition once again to see if they would like to add or revise it to make it more relevant to family support. Let them know that if not, the group will use this same definition as a framework for further discussions.

DISCUSSION E

Not All Groups Are Teams: How to Tell the Difference

30 minutes

According to Katzenbach and Smith, not all groups are teams. Teamwork represents a set of values, but teamwork values by themselves are not exclusive to teams, nor are they enough to ensure team performance.

Distribute the handout "Not All Groups are Teams: How to Tell the Difference" [**A-2**]. Give trainees a moment to review the handout; then, read the differences aloud. Pause and ask for comments after each point and discuss how teamwork differs from "ordinary" group work.

Not All Groups Are Teams: How to Tell the Difference

Working Group	Team
Strong, clearly focused leader roles	Shared leadership
Individual accountability	Individual and mutual accountability
The group's purpose is the same as the broader organizational mission	Specific team purpose that the team itself delivers
Individual work-products	Collective work-products
Runs efficient meetings	Encourages open-minded discussion and active problem solving meetings
Measures its effectiveness indirectly by its influence on others (e.g., financial performance of the business)	Measures performance directly by assessing collective work-products
Discusses, decides, and delegates	Discusses, decides, and does real work together

“ …

How does this fit with your experience of being in a working group vs. working on a team? How would you summarize the critical differences between the two?

Katzenbach and Smith tell us that the distinction between a group and a team depends on "... performance *results. A working group's performance is a function of what its members do as individuals. A team's performance includes both individual results and what we call 'collective work-products.' A collective work-product is what two or more members must work on together.... Whatever it is, a collective work-product reflects the joint, real contribution of team members."*

What are some examples of "collective work-products" that family center teams might be responsible for?

… ”

Possible Answers:

➡ If these answers are not offered, you may want to bring them up

- Designing a family assessment tool
- Assessing your success in helping teen parents delay subsequent pregnancies
- Learning more about a certain topic, such as how to be more culturally responsive in your work with families

“ …

So to summarize what we've seen so far, real teamwork takes time. Every member must commit to articulating the team's purpose and sharing responsibility for achieving the team's performance goals. And in the end, teams are accountable to themselves. This all seems so simple: a common commitment, a clear purpose in which all believe, a set of performance goals to reach ("the light at the end of the tunnel"), shared accountability for getting the collective (as well as the individual) work done, and responsibility for the quality *of "collective work-product."*

The hard part, however, is the "how." How does this all happen? What are the steps necessary to build teams in such a way that they actually work? What are the characteristics of building effective team performance? Answering some of these questions is our next step.

… ”

F BREAK

15 minutes

MINI-LECTURE G

30 minutes

Characteristics of Building Teams and Team Performance

Distribute the handout, "Approaches Used by Successful Teams in Building Team Performance" [**A-3**].

Carol Scearce, in her book 100 Ways to Build Teams *(1992), identifies eight major areas that contribute to effective teams and high team-performance, and Katzenbach and Smith point to similar characteristics in the handout I've just given you. Scearce defines these areas as:*

Project each element [masters provided in handout **A-4**, "Effective Teams/High Performance"] overhead as you review each one with the group. Encourage questions, but remind the trainees that you will explore some of these in more depth a little later.

1. Building trust

The most common cause of team failure is the inability of team members to get along because there's no trust. Trust will develop over time if the team is moving in positive directions. Authenticity is the key to trust. Team members who laugh and take risks together build trust at a faster rate and on a higher level than if they do not.

2. Making a mission

The mission should clearly define what the team cares about and wants to accomplish. It is through the mission that team members become committed. This is similar to Katzenbach and Smith's idea of adhering to the common commitment and purpose of the team. Mission statements empower people and lead them to action. The mission should be clearly understood by all team members, and it should guide the team's actions.

3. Discovering leadership

On a team, leadership can be shared. People are energized through leadership. In order for a team to function it must have strong leadership both from managers above and from within the team. The leadership within the team, though, is shared among all members.

4. Establishing roles and responsibilities

To Katzenbach and Smith's point that team members must be selected on the basis of their current and potential skill rather than their personalities, Scearce adds that a team that wants to function at its highest level seriously considers what roles it needs to fill in order to do that. When individual team members understand the roles, they can better understand the jobs of all the team members. Establishing roles helps team members understand where they fit within the team and how they contribute to achieving the team's mission. For a team to be successful, every member must be aware of the importance of roles, must have a role, and must realize that all roles are of equal importance and that everyone is accountable.

5. Establishing a code of conduct

This commitment-building process, which is related to establishing roles and responsibilities, occurs when the team candidly explores who is best suited to each task and how individual roles will come together. This code of conduct, or the "culture" of the team, should encourage active listening and should offer ways to handle conflict and to treat each other with dignity. A team must establish norms in order to be clear about "the way we do things around here," or as Katzenbach and Smith call it, establishing a "social contract."

6. Managing meetings

Katzenbach and Smith encourage spending lots of time together. Scearce points to the psychological reasons for meetings, which include: (1) a need to be part of a group; (2) a need for a sense of togetherness, trust, belonging; (3) a need to ease loneliness and the burden of responsibility; and (4) the need to develop a sense of commitment. Two questions that should always be used to evaluate the success of meetings are: (1) What happened? and (2) What problems did we solve?

7. Giving and receiving feedback

Every team should have a system that gives each team member an opportunity to reflect on him- or herself first privately and then to the team. The team should provide feedback about whether or not the team is sticking to its mission and how it is abiding by its norms. Every time feedback is given, an action plan should be developed that outlines what the team needs to do to perform at a higher level.

8. Celebrating successes

Celebration serves as an important vehicle for informal communication and mingling across groups. People want to know their work matters; achievement deserves recognition. Team members must develop celebrations that are really celebrations of success, not feeble attempts to do something just for the sake of doing something. Recognition and the celebration of success motivates higher accomplishments. Katzenbach and Smith say people in teams have great "skill potential" even if they do not possess the skills from the outset. People have a way of becoming what you encourage them to be.

Characteristics of Building Teams: Revisited

G MINI-LECTURE

15 minutes

Let's now revisit in more depth some of the characteristics of building effective, high-performing teams that we discussed earlier. Because we do not have enough time in this training to explore all of the areas fully, we're going to take a closer look at the topics that are overlooked most often, but are most in need of attention: making a mission statement, establishing roles and responsibilities, and setting a code of conduct.

Part One: Making a Mission Statement

Keep It Simple

Project the "Making a Mission" transparency.

The mission should clearly define what the team cares about and wants to accomplish. It is through the mission that team members become committed. Mission statements empower people and lead them to action. The mission should be clearly understood by all team members, and it should guide the team's actions.

Sometimes it may seem as though the mission is made outside the team—perhaps the manager charges the team with a specific task and this is interpreted as the mission. It is always important, however, for the team members themselves to reconstruct the mission together so that everyone is clear about what is to be done, by whom, and by when, etc.

One of the first meetings (if not the *first meeting) a team has together should be focused on making a mission statement. The mission should be intact while the team is being formed, and should embody the answers to Scearce's five questions:*

1. *Who will deliver the service?*
2. *Who will benefit?*
3. *What is the nature of the service?*
4. *What constitutes observable evidence that the services are effective and effectively delivered?*
5. *What is the level of accountability?*

The mission becomes the basis for allocating resources—time, money, or people—to the team and its members. The mission is the basis of measurable goals and team outcomes, and should be discussed and evaluated on a regular basis.

ACTIVITY H

15 minutes

Top Five

When creating a mission statement, it is helpful to think about what team members value. This exercise will help you articulate and rank certain values for yourself.

Distribute the handout, "Top Five" [**A-5**]. Ask participants to add any additional values they think should be a part of the list.

- Dedication to family growth
- Promoting self-esteem
- Believing in evolving abilities
- Total development of the child/family
- Dedication to improvement in family functioning
- Dedication to personal and professional growth
- Loyalty to family support program and staff
- Honesty and forthrightness
- Cooperative support
- Upholding procedures and approach of family support program

Ask trainees to rank the items according to the ones they value the most—1 being the most valued and 10 being the least valued. Ask the group to share their rankings. Once they have shared, place a card with each value on the wall. Distribute the "Consensus Chart" handout; have the team use it to vote on each value and to try to reach consensus on the top five values of the group. Lead them in a discussion of the importance of understanding what their teammates value and how it relates to their idea of the team's mission.

Now that we've explored some of the values of this group, let's consider the steps to creating a mission statement.

I ACTIVITY

15 minutes

Keep It Simple

Write the following statement on the newsprint:

The major reasons for the development of teams in family support programs might be to achieve the following:

Ask the group to offer suggestions, and list their responses on the chart. Then ask them to synthesize their comments into three or four sentences and add these to the chart. Remind them of the values they discussed and the questions that a mission statement should answer, and check how many of these are presented in the team mission.

J ACTIVITY

30 minutes

Part Two: Setting Roles and Responsibilities

Having a mission and an understanding of the team's purpose is a crucial first step. Knowing what everyone on the team will do to fulfill the mission is another matter entirely. Again, if a team is to be successful, everyone on the team must be aware of the importance of roles, must have a role, and must realize that all roles are of equal importance and that everyone is accountable.

Divide the group into three smaller groups. Distribute a set of "role cards" to each group. Each set contains each of the following cards: Leader, Recorder, Timekeeper, Materials person, Observer, Encourager, Question captain, and Checker. Ask each person in each group to draw a card and to read the role and role description on it aloud.

Use these questions to guide a discussion based on the role cards:

- *Why is this role important to the functioning of the team?*
- *What other tasks might be added to the role description?*
- *What other or different roles might be needed in a family support program team?*
- *What might be the value or difficulty of having roles change regularly?*
- *What happens when someone does not fulfill his or her role?*

ACTIVITY K

Part Three: Establishing a Code of Conduct

30 minutes

“ . . . *All effective teams develop rules of conduct at the outset to help them achieve their purpose and performance goals. The most critical initial rules pertain to attendance (for example, “no interruptions to take phone calls”), discussion (“no sacred cows”), confidentiality (“the only things to leave this room are what we agree on”), analytic approach (“facts are friendly”), end-product orientation (“everyone gets assignments and does them”), constructive confrontation (“no finger pointing”), and contributions (“everyone does real work”).*

With these in mind, and remaining in small groups, let's think about certain behaviors and “rules” that help a team function effectively. Brainstorm within your group and list your responses on a piece of paper. You will have 10 minutes. . . . ”

After ten minutes, put the following statement on a chart:

I'm good at ________, so when ________ happens I'll be responsible for ________.

From their lists, team members should choose one behavior they think they would be good at and complete the statement on the chart (e.g., “I'm good at staying on task, so when the team is off task for over five minutes, I'll be responsible for getting them back on task by giving a signal”). Have a recorder from each team write down each member's response. Each team member should be responsible for something on the list. Some team members may take more than one. This should take 15 minutes. Call everyone back together to share their “norms” for behavior. Elicit a discussion about code of conduct in a family support program team and how these same behaviors can be translated into work with children and families.

“ . . . *Like any group over time, teams are dynamic and evolve as their members continue to work together. Before we have a chance to actually put these team-building exercises to use tomorrow, I'd like to close today with a brief review of the four stages of team development and growth.* . . . ”

MINI-LECTURE L

Stages of Team Development

5 minutes

“ . . . *There are two basic concepts or principles of team theory. We have already explored the first—sharing—in the context of sharing one* *mission, sharing tasks and experiences, and sharing leadership, consequences, and accountability. These are the building blocks of teams. The second important concept is the team growth process. Team development is typically broken down into four stages: forming, storming, norming, and performing.*

*Groups may have high morale even before they start to address the task at hand, while they are still in the **forming** stage. This stage is often characterized by excitement, optimism, pride, suspicion, fear, and anxiety. Often there is not a high level of trust, and team members don't really do business any differently than before.*

*In the **storming** stage, there is often arguing among members and much defensiveness. A strong sense of competition for roles and concern about excessive work also characterize this stage. Team members may be establishing unrealistic goals; members realize something is not right. Members aren't collaborating or functioning as a team.*

***Norming** occurs when team members realize that the team as a way of doing business takes a lot of work; but they accept it as a way to do business and believe everything is going to work out. Team members often are friendlier, confide in each other, share problems, and attempt to gain harmony. They establish and maintain team norms and procedural standards.*

*Finally, the team begins **performing**. Both morale and competence are high as teams achieve the performance levels expected. Team members have a better understanding of others' strengths and weaknesses, and, as Scearce puts it, there is an overall sense of satisfaction at the team's progress.*

Although this progression of stages is often predictable, it is seldom rapid or steady. Teams may in fact regress in their development if there are changes in, say, team makeup, or in other external factors that may affect the team's performance.

Think back to the examples of teams that you've been a part of that we discussed this morning. What stages did you go through in those teams? Do these characteristics sound familiar? How did it feel to be a part of a team that was in the "performing" stage? In the "storming" stage? Is it easy now, in retrospect, to pinpoint what some of the problems might have been in certain stages, and how your team could have overcome them?

➠ Use these questions to guide a short discussion based on the day's work.

M LUNCH

1 hour

MINI-LECTURE N

Putting the Information to Use

10 minutes

" . . . *We went through a lot of material this morning, and explored some of the critical elements, stages, and characteristics of teams and team development. Although we have worked on some of these topics in brief "work groups," we have not had an opportunity yet to truly work in teams.*

One way to use teams, according to Gary Stokes from Mid-Iowa Community Action, is in improving and innovating throughout an organization, such as a family support program.

In his book Staff and Board Development in the Community Action Agency, *Gary Stokes writes:*

"An effective way to achieve both continuous improvement and innovation—a strategy used in almost all top performing business organizations in the world—is assignment of improvement and innovation at the team level."

He says that the many approaches to this described in books and articles have several common themes:

- *They require staff to collaborate in work teams to produce improvements, new knowledge, processes, or products.*
- *They provide an organizational structure or vehicle for knowledge creation and knowledge harvesting.*
- *They empower workers to improve quality and grant them ownership of this improvement.*
- *They encourage learning as a way of living, working, and thinking.*
- *They make work more creative, fun, and exciting.*

Once staff have been assigned to teams, they can be asked to develop an innovation project. The idea is to have the team understand that the innovation activities will ultimately help them in their work. This can be achieved by inviting them to innovate in an area that provides some opportunity they have wanted to pursue. Or workers can form teams to innovate in areas that have caused them problems. "The innovations should always be in the center of the team's normal work activities," says Stokes.

So whether you are assigned to a working team of "like" staff in your family support program, such as others in your "department," or to an interdisciplinary team, an innovation project can be part of your team's overall mission and purpose. As a way to begin to work through some of the elements we've learned about working in and building teams, we're now going to come up with some examples of innovation projects. . . . "

Construction Exercise

O ACTIVITY

1 hour

Step 1

Divide people up into groups of four or five. Distribute the following materials to each group:

Six flexible straws
Scissors
Three pieces of tape
Note cards with the following titles: Architect, Construction Worker, Project Manager, Salesperson, Observer (optional).

Instruct the group to construct a building using the limited materials provided. Each person should follow their role. Architect designs the building; Construction Worker builds it; project manager rations the supplies and the sales person must sell it. Instruct the Observer to take note of the interactions during the group process.

Step 2

After giving the groups approximately 10 minutes to design and build their buildings, reconvene the larger group and have each sales person describe the concept behind the building and sell it to the larger group. Ask the group to vote on whether or not to buy each building.

Step 3

When every group has presented their building, ask them to discuss the group process:

- Was it easy to work as a team?
- How did it feel to have others make decisions that affected your work?
- How did you resolve differences?
- What technique did group members use to help the process along?

Conclude with a brief discussion about the importance of clear, open lines of communication in group work.

ACTIVITY P

Evaluation

15 minutes

Distribute the "Ten Criteria for Effective Team Building" [**A-6**].

Ten Criteria for Effective Team Building

1. Goals and objectives
2. Trust and conflict
3. Leadership
4. Use of resources
5. Interpersonal communication
6. Control and procedures
7. Problem solving and decision-making
8. Experimentation and creativity
9. Self-evaluation
10. Roles, responsibility, and authority

Rate your team on a scale of 1 (poor) to 10 (excellent) for each characteristic, and identify areas you need to improve (you may not be able to respond to every item). Analyzing and measuring success is a critical step in a team-building process, writes Edward Kazemek, the author of this article. "Few work teams score high on every one of these criteria. Usually, the criterion or dimension of team functioning that a team ignores is what holds it back from becoming as effective as possible."

ACTIVITY Q

Giving and Receiving Feedback

15 minutes

Feedback on the team's processes is extremely important for the team's growth. Positive reinforcement works as well in the team context as anywhere else.

Now let's discuss and reflect on how the team worked together.

Let each team decide upon one area in which they will give and receive feedback:

- Team roles
- Individual performance as a team member
- The team's functioning as a whole

Once they choose an area, ask them to think for a few minutes about the following questions and then answer them in their groups. Each group should take a question at a time; each member should respond to that question before the team moves on to the next one. Have a team member record the responses.

Questions:

- What was I (were we) expected to do?
- What did I (we) do well?
- What should I (we) do differently?
- What support do I need from the team?
- Do we need to continue or to change our performance?

Remember to encourage and thank everyone for being open and honest.

Wrap-up

R DISCUSSION

“ …

15 minutes

We've reviewed a large body of material today, and have explored the many facets and components of teams and team building. We've defined teams for ourselves and have examined others' definitions. We've reviewed the various stages through which teams often move in their growth. We've explored some of the steps that are necessary for building effective teams and for creating an environment within teams that is appropriate and is necessary to working with children and families in the best, most productive way.

➨ Use these questions to guide a short discussion to wrap up the training.

- *What kinds of questions still remain?*
- *What are your concerns?*
- *Has this information been helpful to you?*
- *What are some difficulties that might arise in working as teams?*
- *What might be the benefits?*

Thank you all very much.

… ”

RECOMMENDED READING

Buckman, B. in Jessup, Harlan R (September 1992) "The Road to Results for Teams," *Training & Development.*

Katzenbach, J. & D. K. Smith (March–April 1993) "The Discipline of Teams," *Harvard Business Review.*

Kazemek, E. A. (September 1991) "Ten criteria for effective team building," *Healthcare Financial Management*, v. 45.

Scearce, C. (1992) *100 Ways to Build Teams.* (Palatine, IL: IRI/Skylight Publishing, Inc.)

Stokes, G. Staff and Board Development in the Community Action Agency.

HANDOUTS & OVERHEADS INCLUDED

A-1 • **The Elements of a Team: Discussion Questions**

A-2 • **Not All Groups are Teams: How to Tell the Difference**

A-3 • **Approaches Used by Successful Teams in Building Team Performance**

A-4 • **Effective Teams/High Team Performance (overheads, 8 pages)**

A-5 • **Top Five**

A-6 • **Ten Criteria for Effective Team Building**

Handout A-1

The Elements of a Team: Discussion Questions

1. Small number of people

- Why do you think a team should be comprised of a small number of people? What are the benefits for the organization? What are the benefits for the team members?
- What is an ideal number of people for a team?
- Can a team be too large or too small?
- How should a family support program with a small number of staff develop teams?
- Is it possible for a family center staff to form more than one team? If not, why not? If so, how would they work? Provide examples.

2. Complementary skills

- What are the skills that you as staff working in family centers and family support programs, perhaps in teams, need to have?
- Do all staff (or all team members) need to have the same skills?
- What does this concept of "complementary skills" mean in the context of a family center or family support program? How might managers help build teams of staff whose skills complement each other? Provide examples.

3. Common purpose

- What are some of the common purposes that staff teams in family support programs can organize around?
- Is the team's common purpose the same as that of the larger organization?
- What kinds of obstacles might arise if there is no consensus around a common purpose for a family support program team?

4. Set of performance goals and approach

- How could you, as a member of a family support program team, develop a clear set of performance goals in your work with families?
- What are some examples of possible performance goals you would want your team to pursue?
- How should the performance goals of your team fit in with those of the larger organization?
- What assistance might you need from your manager(s) to help you define performance goals?
- Given that family support is an approach, not a service, what is the approach you would want to embrace (both in your work with families and with each other on the team)? How do these expectations affect how you shape and evaluate your work?

5. Mutually accountable

- What does it mean for you, as team members, to hold yourselves and each other mutually accountable?
- How is this the same or different from being held accountable by your boss or by management?
- What strategies could you employ within your team to help yourselves and each other be accountable?

Not All Groups Are Teams: How to Tell the Difference

Working Group	Team
Strong, clearly focused leader roles	Shared leadership
Individual accountability	Individual and mutual accountability
The group's purpose is the same as the broader organizational mission	Specific team purpose that the team itself delivers
Individual work-products	Collective work-products
Runs efficient meetings	Encourages open-minded discussion and active problem solving meetings
Measures its effectiveness indirectly by its influence on others (e.g., financial performance of the business)	Measures performance directly by assessing collective work-products
Discusses, decides, and delegates	Discusses, decides, and does real work together

Handout A-3

From Katzenbach, J. R., and Smith, D. K., "The Discipline of Teams," *Harvard Business Review* March-April 1993.

Approaches Used by Successful Teams in Building Team Performance

1. Establish urgency, demanding performance standards and direction

2. Select members for skill and skill potential, not personality

3. Pay particular attention to first meetings and actions

4. Set some clear rules of behavior

5. Set and seize upon a few immediate performance-oriented tasks and goals

6. Challenge the group regularly with fresh facts and information

7. Spend lots of time together

8. Exploit the power of positive feedback, recognition and reward

Handout/Overhead A-4 (page 1)

From Scearce, C. (1992) *100 Ways to Build Teams.* (Palatine, IL: IRI/Skylight Publishing, Inc.)

Effective Teams/High Team Performance

1. Building trust

The most common cause of team failure is the inability of team members to get along because there's no trust. Trust will develop over time if the team is moving in positive directions. Authenticity is the key to trust. Team members who laugh and take risks together build trust at a faster rate and on a higher level than if they do not.

From Scearce, C. (1992) *100 Ways to Build Teams*. (Palatine, IL: IRI/Skylight Publishing, Inc.)

Effective Teams/High Team Performance

2. Making a mission

The mission should clearly define what the team cares about and wants to accomplish. It is through the mission that team members become committed. Mission statements empower people and lead them to action. The mission should be clearly understood by all team members, and it should guide the team's actions.

Handout/Overhead A-4 (page 3)

From Scearce, C. (1992) *100 Ways to Build Teams*. (Palatine, IL: IRI/Skylight Publishing, Inc.)

Effective Teams/High Team Performance

3. Discovering leadership

On a team, leadership can be shared. People are energized through leadership. In order for a team to function it must have strong leadership both from managers above and from within the team. The leadership within the team, though, is shared among all members.

Effective Teams/High Team Performance

4. Establishing roles and responsibilities

A team that wants to function at its highest level seriously considers what roles it needs to fill in order to do that. When individual team members understand the roles, they can better understand the jobs of all the team members. Establishing roles helps team members understand where they fit within the team and how they contribute to achieving the team's mission. For a team to be successful, every member must be aware of the importance of roles, must have a role, and must realize that all roles are of equal importance and that everyone is accountable.

From Scearce, C. (1992) *100 Ways to Build Teams.* (Palatine, IL: IRI/Skylight Publishing, Inc.)

Effective Teams/High Team Performance

5. Establishing a code of conduct

This commitment-building process, which is related to the roles and responsibilities, occurs when the team candidly explores who is best suited to each task and how individual roles will come together. This code of conduct, or the "culture" of the team, should encourage active listening and should offer ways to handle conflict and to treat each other with dignity. A team must establish norms in order to be clear about "the way we do things around here."

From Scearce, C. (1992) *100 Ways to Build Teams.* (Palatine, IL: IRI/Skylight Publishing, Inc.)

Effective Teams/High Team Performance

6. Managing meetings

The psychological reasons for meetings include: (1) a need to be part of a group; (2) a need for a sense of togetherness, trust, belonging; (3) a need to ease loneliness and the burden of responsibility; and (4) the need to develop a sense of commitment. Two questions that should always be used to evaluate the success of meetings are: 1) What happened? and 2) What problems did we solve?

From Scearce, C. (1992) *100 Ways to Build Teams.* (Palatine, IL: IRI/Skylight Publishing, Inc.).

Effective Teams/High Team Performance

7. Giving and receiving feedback

Every team should have a system that gives each team member an opportunity to reflect on him- or herself first privately and then to the team. The team should provide feedback about whether or not the team is sticking to its mission and how it is abiding by its norms. Every time feedback is given, an action plan should be developed that outlines what the team needs to do to perform at a higher level.

From Scearce, C. (1992) *100 Ways to Build Teams*. (Palatine, IL: IRI/Skylight Publishing, Inc.)

Effective Teams/High Team Performance

8. Celebrating successes

Celebration serves as an important vehicle for informal communication and mingling across groups. People want to know their work matters; achievement deserves recognition. Team members must develop celebrations that are really celebrations of success, not feeble attempts to do something just for the sake of doing something. Recognition and the celebration of success motivates higher accomplishments.

Handout A-5

From Scearce, C. (1992) *100 Ways to Build Teams.* (Palatine, IL: IRI/Skylight Publishing, Inc.)

Top Five

Dedication to family growth
Promoting self-esteem
Believing in evolving abilities
Total development of the child/family
Dedication to improvement in family functioning
Dedication to personal and professional growth
Loyalty to family support program and staff
Honesty and forthrightness
Cooperative support
Upholding procedures and approach of family support program

Handout A-6

From Kazemek, E. A. (September 1991). "Ten criteria for effective team building." *Healthcare Financial Management*, v. 45.

Ten Criteria for Effective Team Building

1. Goals and objectives
2. Trust and conflict
3. Leadership
4. Use of resources
5. Interpersonal communication
6. Control and procedures
7. Problem solving and decision making
8. Experimentation and creativity
9. Self-evaluation
10. Roles, responsibility, and authority

Appendix B

Support Groups

Purpose

To understand how support groups can be an effective family support strategy within a larger service delivery system

Goals

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- Discuss the benefits of support groups
- Describe the logistics involved in organizing support groups
- Identify strategies for successful maintenance of support groups
- Demonstrate an understanding of group process and development
- Demonstrate effective group facilitation skills
- Discuss strategies for dealing with various personalities in group settings

AGENDA

4 hours, 5 minutes

Activity	Icebreaker	20 minutes
Mini-Lecture	Benefits and Goals	15 minutes
Activity	Personal Experience With Groups	30 minutes
Mini-Lecture	Logistics of Organizing Support Groups	15 minutes
Break		10 minutes
Activity	Planning for the First Meeting	1 hour
Mini-Lecture & Discussion	Group Maintenance and Evaluation	15 minutes
Mini-Lecture & Discussion	Group Facilitators and Group Facilitation	15 minutes
Break		10 minutes
Activity	Staging a Mock Support Group	45 minutes
Mini-Lecture	Conclusion	10 minutes

Time required

1/2 day

Materials provided

Handouts: *Starting and Operating Support Groups*

Materials needed

Copies of handouts; easel, newsprint, markers, and tape, note-pad or paper for each participant

Trainer preparation

Review module, photocopy handouts, read recommended reading. If you have never facilitated or been a participant in a support group, try to sit in on a couple of group meetings.

Before beginning the session, hand out a copy of *Starting and Operating Support Groups* to each participant.

ACTIVITY A

Icebreaker—New Acquaintance Bingo

20 minutes

Welcome everyone to the training and introduce yourself. Introduce the New Acquaintance Bingo game as a way for the group to get to know each other.

Objective

To allow newcomers to make new acquaintances in a nonthreatening climate.

Procedure

Distribute "New Acquaintance Bingo Game" handout [**B-1**]. Each person moves around the room until they find someone who fits the description on their card. That person then signs his or her name in the appropriate slot. The game continues until someone gets "bingo." The winner reads the names and characteristics aloud.

MINI-LECTURE B

Benefits and Goals of Support Groups

15 minutes

“...

Support groups are one of the many techniques and activities that family support programs use to foster family development. Today we will discuss the benefits and goals of support groups; how to set them up; how to facilitate them; and how to maintain and evaluate them. While discussing these subjects will help you prepare to coordinate and facilitate support groups, it is important to recognize from the start that support groups must be tailored to meet the specific needs and interests of the families involved.

Benefits and Goals (cont'd)

Before we discuss effective strategies for coordinating and facilitating support groups, we need to define what a support group is and why and how it can be a useful tool in family support.

What are your notions about what a support group is and how it can be useful?

… ”

Allow a few minutes for the trainees to offer their ideas. You may want to write them on newsprint.

“ …

A support group (sometimes called a self-help group or mutual aid group) is simply a group of people with a common life situation or set of challenges, meeting together to help themselves by sharing their experiences, ideas, frustrations, successes, and hopes.

Let's go through some of the benefits and goals of support groups:

Emotional support
People offer each other empathy, acceptance, encouragement, positive role models, and genuine concern and caring. They also give and receive understanding and appreciation for their efforts.

➡ You may want to write each heading on the newsprint or blackboard.

Information/education
Guest speakers, resource materials, and advice from peers enhance parenting knowledge, adolescent development, and other types of development. Through support groups, families can get information that addresses their specific concerns. For example, parents of children with special needs can learn more about those needs; parents of adolescents can get information on substance abuse and alternative education programs; and parents of young children can get childcare referral.

Helping others
Having the opportunity to use personal experiences to help another person deal with the same situation or a similar one enhances the participant's self esteem. Additionally, recipients of help feel more empowered when they themselves have opportunities to reciprocate.

Socializing
Friendships are forged in support groups. Participants also enjoy social activities such as potlucks, cultural events, holiday parties, and weekend retreats.

Advocacy

At the local level, parent groups can advocate for better childcare or can develop or improve community-school linkages. Parent groups testify at congressional hearings on child welfare and family support issues, and can belong to national family advocacy organizations. The bonds created among participants make groups an effective force in influencing social attitudes and governmental policies through education and advocacy. These benefits and goals are also described on page two of the Family Resource Coalition of America's publication, Starting and Operating Support Groups.

A facilitator is extremely helpful in getting groups started and in helping the group achieve its stated goals. If an agreed upon facilitator does not exist, a strong personality within the group may become the de facto facilitator which could turn some participants off. Understanding how groups work and believing in their effectiveness is essential for all parties involved, but especially for the group facilitator. If the facilitator questions the efficacy of support groups, the group he or she is working with is likely to sense this and withhold full investment.

A merely intellectual grasp of the material explored in groups is not enough, both for facilitators and for participants. Parents must accept and understand it at a much deeper emotional level to actually change behavior. By presenting material in a manner that enhances self-esteem, encourages self-discovery, personalizes information, and nurtures group support, facilitators can create a climate conducive to the required level of acceptance and understanding.

Research has revealed repeatedly that support groups assist in the personal growth of participants. L. Frances Anderson and Sharon E. Robertson of the University of Calgary provide a useful summary of this research. They say that personal growth is a social process, and that it is therefore fostered by relationships with groups of people in which cultural permission is present. Cultural permission occurs when individuals are allowed, and allow themselves, to openly and honestly disclose their feelings about each other and to give each other feedback on the impact of their interactive styles. Such disclosure and feedback is not normally practiced in daily life, and thus the support group experience offers participants a unique opportunity to gain valuable insights.

Also, receiving direct feedback from a number of people gives *participants a "reality check" on a chance to compare their perceptions of their experiences, of themselves, and of others with other group members.*

Finally, support groups give support group members the opportunity to risk practicing new behaviors in a climate of trust and psychological safety, increasing the likelihood that they will internalize the behaviors (Anderson and Robertson, 1985).

Essentially, a group can and should provide a positive, safe atmosphere where disclosure and validation of feelings and perceptions can occur and lead to personal growth.

… ”

Personal Experience With Groups

C ACTIVITY

“ … 30 minutes

Think for a moment about your personal experience with groups. You may have been part of a support group, may have taken part in a staff development exercise similar to a support group, or may have exchanged feelings and feedback in a positive way in a group of friends or family.

Take a few moments to write about this experience.

➡ You may want to list these questions on newsprint

- *What were three characteristics of this group that made it successful?*
- *What three things did you learn from this group?*
- *How did you feel being part of this group?*
- *Compare how you would have handled the situation or topic of the group differently if you had been on your own.*

… ”

Give trainees about 10 minutes to write, then ask them to share their experiences with the whole group. List the positive aspects they identify on newsprint or on the blackboard.

“ …

The positive aspects that you have just identified can help you create groups in which others can have similarly positive experiences. It might be helpful to keep them and review them before facilitating or coordinating a support group.

… ”

MINI-LECTURE D

Logistics of Organizing Support Groups

15 minutes

“ . . . *Before you begin organizing a support group, consider the offerings of other organizations. There may be excellent groups within your community that meet the needs of the families with whom you are working. Consider referring participants to these groups. If the families you are working with determine that existing groups do not match their needs and interests, they may still be a good resource. You and a few people interested in starting a support group could ask to attend a meeting of another group to observe how it functions. The staff and participants at the meeting also may be able to provide you with pointers about starting and maintaining your own group. Be sure to clear your visit in advance with staff, and that they get the permission of group members.*

Keep in mind that support groups are one of many tools to assist individuals and groups of people in experiencing growth. They are not meant to replace other tools such as individual or family therapy, which are available through other agencies, if not your own. Discuss this with potential group members both as the group is forming and afterward, as others express interest—especially with those who may benefit from other activities or services either instead of or in combination with a support group. Many participants take part in a support group and in other activity or service simultaneously.

Before we work through the nuts and bolts of setting up and maintaining a support group, we need to speak about staff members' roles. While they may help families organize and even facilitate the group, the families involved must have true ownership. Staff serve as a resource to the group rather than being the driving force behind it. The information we share today should help staff feel more confident in their role as resource. We will discuss setting up the group, including publicity and recruitment, as well as how to facilitate group meetings and evaluate their effectiveness. Although there are no strict rules on how to set up a support group, there are a couple guidelines to consider:

1. A support group supports itself.

A core of people or families who want to organize a group must do the legwork to pull the group together. While you may introduce the concept of a support group to families and may even provide them with your guidance and facilitation skills, the group must "belong" to group members, and they must be invested in it. This sense of self-ownership is one of the keys to the success of support groups. Maintaining the appropriate distance can be difficult, particularly when you have been asked to facilitate the group. During this session we will discuss some tips for effective facilitation that keeps control in the hands of support group members.

You may want to write these headings on newsprint.

2. Don't reinvent the wheel (unless you can do it better).

As I suggested a moment ago, ask to attend another support group's meeting and get ideas from people who have done this before. Borrow ideas from how another group operates, organizes, recruits, publicizes, etc. Even negative examples can help giving you ideas about what to avoid.

Okay—you've done your research; now it's time to start organizing the group. First, designate a contact person from among those who want to form a group. The primary functions of the contact person are:

- *To make parents feel comfortable about coming to meetings*
- *To provide meeting information for interested parents*
- *To answer general questions about the group*
- *To make reminder phone calls to members about meetings*

This position may rotate, but not as frequently as other positions because flyers and announcements must be updated to reflect the change.

Once the group has a contact person, find a suitable meeting place and time. Be sure the group's organizers consider the pros and cons of all potential times and locations:

- *Will it be easy and safe for all members to access?*
- *Is childcare available?*
- *Is there enough space?*
- *Is it comfortable?*
- *Is it a setting in which confidentially can be maintained?*

Possible meeting places include churches, synagogues, schools, libraries, hospitals, or on-site at the sponsoring agencies. Once the time and place have been chosen, the group should stick with them, to encourage attendance and to make it easy for people to join.

Where do you find those people? The group's organizers may have friends and neighbors in mind who would like to join the group. Word-of-mouth is an excellent way to spread the word and to encourage participation.

Another effective way to recruit members is by going to places of interest to them. If you're looking for parents of pre-schoolers, go to nursery schools, playgrounds, or the WIC Clinic. If you're looking for teenagers, go to the high school and arrange to speak in some classes. If possible, provide incentives for group participation: serve meals or snacks; provide free childcare; offer free samples of diapers or other donated baby items. Be particularly creative if you are reaching out to people who have previously been disenfranchised—while they may be harder to reach, they may have the most to gain and contribute.

Publicizing the group is easier than recruiting. Again, the key is to be creative. Produce fliers and announcements that catch people's attention, and put them in grocery stores, places of worship, schools, service agencies, and other places in the community. Starting and Operating Support Groups *includes sample fliers and ideas on where to place them. It is full of detailed information that gets down to the nuts and bolts of setting up your group.*

…”

BREAK [redacted] E

10 minutes

Planning for the First Meeting

F [redacted] ACTIVITY

1 hour

The best way to understand how to organize a support group's first meeting is to try it. Take a few moments to read pages six through 10 in Starting and Operating Support Groups. *Then get together in groups of five or six (preferably with people from your organization or community).*

Once the groups have formed, give each person one copy each of the following "Mock Support Group" worksheets: "Group Purpose" [**B-2**], "Group Guidelines" [**B-3**], "Possible Discussion Topics or Guest Speakers" [**B-4**], and "Possible Activities" [**B-5**].

I've handed each team a set of worksheets to help you plan your mock support group. Fill them out as you do the following:

First, decide as a team what issue you want the support group to deal with. Use the "Mock Support Group Purpose" worksheet.

Go through the "Tips for a Successful First Meeting" in Starting and Operating Support Groups *together, discussing each point and taking notes.*

Then develop guidelines for your support group (there are some examples on page eight of Starting and Operating Support Groups*). Use the "Mock Support Group Guidelines" worksheet.*

Create a list of three or four discussion topics that relate to your support group's theme. Also list topics that you'd like to have a guest speaker come and address. Use the "Possible Discussion Topics or Guest Speakers" worksheet.

Finally, make a list of activities that will meet the goals of your support group and will be enjoyable and interesting for all participants. Use the "Possible Support Group Activities" worksheet.

When you are finished, we will share our ideas and discuss some of your observations of this process.

Move around the room while teams work through the exercise. Answer questions but be sure to let them work on their own. When they are finished, reconvene the large group and facilitate a conversation about the exercise. Have each group briefly describe what they did and why. You may want to ask some of the following questions:

- *How did you decide on the topic for your group? Was there consensus from the beginning? If not, how did you come to an agreement?*
- *Was it difficult to anticipate what would happen at the first meeting? Do you think you have thought of everything? If not, how might your group handle a surprise?*
- *What did you emphasize as you developed your guidelines? Are there other areas you could have covered? Did you have to revise your group's purpose once you had clearly outlined your guidelines?*
- *Did everyone agree on the topics and activities your team listed? If not, how did you come to agreement? Having heard other teams' topics and activities, could you add to your list?*
- *How could this planning process have been more effective? What information, people, and tools would have been useful to your team?*

MINI LECTURE G

Group Maintenance and Evaluation

15 minutes

An important aspect of support groups is that members give and receive feedback about issues facing them. Feedback is essential to the success of the group because it ensures that members' concerns about the group itself are heard and addressed. If participants are unhappy with the direction or functioning of the group, they are likely to stop coming.

As Starting and Operating Support Groups *points out, time for evaluation and discussion of the group itself must be worked into the support group's time. The group may dedicate the last 10 minutes of each meeting to reflecting upon and discussing these issues. The group may want to dedicate a longer block of time less frequently to evaluating itself and making any readjustments it deems necessary. This handout may be helpful in facilitating discussion.*

Hand out "Mock Support Group: Suggested Questions for Group Evaluation" [**B-6**] and lead the group in discussing the questions.

The goal is not to create the "perfect" group—all groups have lulls and problems—but to create an environment in which people are confident that they are being heard and that their concerns can be addressed. This confidence helps members of the group commit to its success and get more personal satisfaction from the group.

Group Facilitators and Group Facilitation

H MINI-LECTURE

... ” 15 minutes

“ ...

Effective facilitation is crucial to the success of a support group. Before we discuss and model some of the do's and don't's of group facilitation, let's talk about the individual facilitator. From what we have discussed thus far and from your experiences and thoughts, what qualities and skills does a group facilitator need?

➡ If the group does not suggest these answers, find a way to work them in.

Possible Answers

(Adapted from Anderson and Robertson, pp. 143-144)

- The group facilitator must be genuine and comfortable in his or her role and must not appear phony or fear honest reactions.
- The group facilitator must be secure and confident in his or her personality and must not be a person who dominates others. He or she must respect others and must not judge them.
- The group facilitator must also be honest, genuine, empathetic, and accepting, and must have concern for others.
- The group facilitator must believe in the value and efficacy of support groups as a medium for change.
- The group facilitator must be self-aware, self-confident, and mature.
- Most importantly, these qualities must be perceived by the group.

“ ... *It might be difficult to find one person who is exemplary in all the ways we've mentioned. It may be useful to have co-facilitators whose strengths and skills complement one another.*

Anderson and Robertson of the University of Calgary have summarized the necessary qualities of a group facilitator this way:

Relationship Stance
The group facilitator displays genuineness, honesty (congruence), acceptance, and empathy.

Self-Awareness
The group facilitator is aware of his or her strengths, weaknesses, fears, natural preferences, and modes of reacting to people in a wide variety of situations.

Belief System
The group facilitator has an internalized personal belief system about helping and about groups as a medium for change.

(Anderson and Robertson, p. 144)

Even those who are "natural" facilitators need to make conscious efforts and take steps to create a safe environment in which honest disclosure of feelings and growth can occur. Let's go through some of the functions of the group facilitator and then look at the particular skills necessary to carry out these important functions. ...❞

Go through the "Group Facilitator Functions and Skills" handout [**B-7**] and encourage discussion about what each item is and how a group facilitator would carry it out.

BREAK I

10 minutes

ACTIVITY J

45 minutes

Staging a Mock Support Group

❝... *The functions and skills we have just discussed are complex and overlapping, and even the most experienced and successful group facilitators sometimes have trouble doing everything required.*

You can gain a deeper understanding of these functions and skills by observing experienced group facilitators. Sitting in on different groups lead by different types of facilitators will help you figure out what works and what doesn't. Through practice, you can identify the personal style that works for you and enable you to refine and hone your skills.

Let's now try staging a support group meeting. We will help the "facilitator" identify his or her skills and areas for improvement, and will take a look at some of the challenges that group members can present.

We need one of the teams who previously designed a support group to act out their mock support group in front of the others. Each member of the team will draw their role in the role-play from a hat. Facilitation mistakes are written into the script; after the role-play we will discuss these mistakes and come up with remedies. ...❞

Place the "Mock Support Group Roles" [**B-8**] in a hat and let each volunteer draw one. Direct the volunteers to the front of the room where everyone else can see and hear them clearly. The staged support group should follow the plan they devised earlier (issue, guidelines, etc.). Give the group a minute to review their plan, but make sure they know not to disclose their roles to the audience. When they are ready give them 15 to 20 minutes to stage the mock meeting. Ask the audience to remain quiet but to take notes for discussion afterwards.

When the staged support group meeting is finished, facilitate a discussion about it. Be sure all trainees (including those who acted out the group) get a chance to contribute to the conversation. Hand out "Common Problems with Group Members" **[B-9]** and "Common Problems in Group Leadership" **[B-10]** and have the group use them to work out alternative solutions or reinforce successful techniques exhibited in the mock support group meeting. Also hand out copies of the "Mock Support Group Roles" for participants to use in the future.

Conclusion

K MINI-LECTURE

“ . . . 10 minutes

Today we have covered many of the issues of developing and implementing support groups. We have discussed and modeled:

- *the use of support groups to foster individual and community growth by providing emotional support, information, empathy, empowerment, social interaction, and advocacy;*
- *the steps that go into setting up a support group, holding and conducting support group meetings, and evaluating and maintaining a support group successfully;*
- *the functions and skills necessary to facilitate a support group; and*
- *the actual running of a support group.*

. . . ”

RECOMMENDED READING

Anderson, L. F. and S. E. Robertson. (May 1985) "Group Facilitation: Functions and Skills," *Small Group Behavior*, vol. 16, no. 2. (Sage Publications) 139-156.

Kohn, Barbara. (1985) "Promoting Powerful Parents: A Model for Parent Discussion Groups and Classes," presented at the Biennial National Training Institute, Washington, DC, December 6–8.

National Resource Center for Family Support Programs, Family Resource Coalition of America. (1991) *Starting and Operating Support Groups*.

HANDOUTS INCLUDED

B-1 • **New Acquaintance Bingo Game**

B-2 • **Mock Support Group**
Purpose

B-3 • **Mock Support Group**
Guidelines

B-4 • **Mock Support Group**
Possible Discussion Topics or Guest Speakers

B-5 • **Mock Support Group**
Possible Activities

B-6 • **Mock Support Group**
Suggested Questions for Group Evaluation

B-7 • **Group Facilitator Functions and Skills**

B-8 • **Mock Support Group Roles**
Group Facilitator (page 1), Quiet Participant (page 2), Interrupting Participant (page 3), Negative Participant (page 4), Perfect Participant (page 5), Monopolizing Participant (page 6)

B-9 • **Common Problems With Group Members**

B-10 • **Common Problems With Group Leadership**

Bingo Game

Ask your fellow participants to sign any square that identifies one of their characteristics. After getting that person's signature, move on to another participant. Shout, "Bingo!" when you fill up one line of squares. The middle square is "free."

PLAYS TENNIS	IS WEARING RED	PLAYS SOCCER	PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR	HAS GRANDCHILDREN
DRIVES A SPORTS CAR	HATES FOOTBALL	LOVES FOOTBALL	FLIES A PLANE	MULTILINGUAL
PLAYS PIANO	HAS TROPICAL FISH	FREE	SKIS	COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON
HAS RED HAIR	HATES SPINACH	HAS TWO CHILDREN	LIKES CAMPING	ATTENDED FRC CONFERENCE
NEW TO FAMILY SUPPORT	DRIVES PICKUP	BROWN EYES	READS NEWSWEEK	HAS BEEN ABROAD

Mock Support Group

Purpose

Names of support group's core members:

Support group's purpose:

Support group's goals:

How will group welcome new members?

Other important issues:

Mock Support Group

Guidelines

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

Mock Support Group

Possible Discussion Topics or Guest Speakers

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Handout B-5

Mock Support Group

Possible Activities

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

Mock Support Group

Suggested Questions for Group Evaluation

What aspects of the group and its meetings are working well?

What should the group do more of?

What successes has the group had? How can we build on these successes?

Are meetings too negative? Has the group turned into a "complaint session," with little constructive support?

Are meetings boring? Does the group cover only "old ground" or follow only a familiar format, not allowing for new members' input?

Is the group's leadership domineering? Does the group belong only to a few people?

Is the leadership ineffective? Does the group seem out of control? Do new members feel unwelcome or unnoticed?

Does the group feel exclusive? Do newcomers perceive cliques or subgroups within the larger group?

Do meetings feel shallow? Does the group get at underlying issues that concern its members, or does it give opportunities for meaningful personal sharing?

Do the meetings feel threatening? Are members frightened away by angry confrontations that aren't resolved or by disruptive members who are not dealt with well by the group?

Are confrontations made in a caring way so no one person feels that the group is ganging up on him or her? Does the leader take sides or does he or she remain neutral, ensuring that different perspectives are heard?

If the group subscribes to confidentiality, is there an air of trust? Does information "leak" out of the group? How are breaches of confidentiality handled?

Handout B-7

Reprinted with permission of Sage Publications from Anderson, L. F. and S. E. Robertson. (1985) "Group Facilitation: Function and Skills," *Small Group Behavior.*

Group Facilitator Functions and Skills

The group facilitator must:

- Understand how support groups function and, specifically, how people are helped by them
- Adapt to the unique group with which he or she is working.

I. Functions

- Clearly presents the group's goals keeps focused on these goals carefully throughout meetings
- Ensures that the group maintains the guidelines upon which it has agreed and that the group handles infractions appropriately
- Is relatively active in the beginning as group members get comfortable with one another to help develop good group interaction, but knows when and how to step back

II. Skills

- **Listens actively**
  Maintains eye contact; shows attentiveness through body posture; and uses verbal techniques such as clarifying, paraphrasing, summarizing, and reflecting.
- **Communicates his or her thoughts clearly**
  Communicates clearly both verbally and through body language. (When group members sense mixed messages they may lose faith in the facilitator and/or the group.)
- **Models** behaviors that create effective interpersonal communication
  Models concreteness, appropriate self-disclosure, immediacy, giving and receiving feedback, and non-defensiveness.
- **Links** the similarities and differences in the thoughts and emotions of group members, helping them see their concerns and facilitating group unity.
- **Interprets**
  Understands the cognitive and emotional meaning underlying group members' statements and experiences, and communicates this verbally and nonverbally at the intrapersonal, interpersonal, and group levels.
- **Regulates**
  Ensures that the activities of individuals and of the group are congruent with individual and group goals, allow members to participate, and fit the developmental stage of the group by modeling, questioning, clarifying, reinforcing (or not reinforcing), reflecting feelings, interpreting, teaching, linking, summarizing, confronting, and giving feedback.
- **Facilitates closure**
  Recognizes issues and helps members work through these issues to ensure resolution. Reaching closure is important, even if it means acknowledging that something that cannot be changed and offering support.

Mock Support Group Role

Group Facilitator

Try to incorporate the group facilitator functions and skills we discussed earlier. Do what you think is best to respond to the styles and personalities of the group members. At various points during the activity, make a few of the following common mistakes:

- Present too many ideas to the group
- Lecture to the group
- Usurp power from the group
- Use the group to aggrandize and empower yourself instead of to meet participants' needs

Mock Support Group Role

Quiet Participant

Try not to say too much throughout the group. When called upon to speak, speak softly. At a point when lots of people are talking try to say something but do not make it clear that you have something to say.

Mock Support Group Role

Interrupting Participant

Interrupt the group discussion fairly frequently. Interject both relevant and completely off-the-subject ideas.

Mock Support Group Role

Negative Participant

Put down others' ideas and statements and dismiss group discussion verbally to the rest of the group.

Mock Support Group Role

Perfect Participant

Without overtly criticizing others, represent yourself as "perfect." Say things like "that never happens to me" or "when that happens, I do (*x*) and it always works."

Mock Support Group Role

Monopolizing Participant

Represent yourself as someone who constantly needs to talk about your problems. While these problems may be valid, you do not let others talk much.

Handout B-9 (page 1)

Developed by Kohn, B. and M. J. Lieberstein (Clayton, Mo.: The Family Center)

Although this document refers to "classes" in some instances, the information presented is very useful to facilitators in any group setting, and was developed by The Family Center for use in support groups as well as in classes.

Common Problems With Group Members

Individual members of a group may engage in particular behavior which can be disruptive and/or destructive to the group dynamics. This section contains suggested leader responses to the more common behaviors that might arise.

Any one of these problem behaviors may warrant more attention than can efficiently and effectively be given within the group setting. If a particular concern continues to arise discuss the issue with the parent outside of class. The parent may be in need of some extended counseling or other professional assistance. Group leaders need to be familiar with various child and family related resources in their local area and should feel free to make referrals when they're indicated. When referrals are made leaders must be prepared to be supportive of the parent/family in their attempts to resolve their difficulties.

Behavioral Style	**Suggested Leader's Response**
1. Continually breaks rules of group	Be certain that rules have been clearly established and understood by all members of the group. When this has been done at the outset the leader can call attention to the rule that has not been followed and not be seen as personally attacking a specific member.
2. "Chatty"; tends to socialize during class	Re-focus the group or individual on the designated class topic calling attention to the limited amount of time available for each session. Acknowledge the enjoyment received from visiting with group members and suggest some alternative times for this, i.e., during coffee break or during play period at the beginning of class.
3. Quiet; little or no participation	Work on making her comfortable in the group. Spend some time with her before class drawing her into conversation with other members. Be positive about input she does provide; let her know her ideas are important to the group. Emphasize her expertise, i.e., "Janice, I think you've had some successful experience in toilet training. Would you share your approach with the group?" Avoid bombarding her with "What do you think, Janice?"
4. Critical of other group members	Like the quiet member this person needs help in feeling comfortable with the group. Attend more to her appropriate group behavior than her criticism. Encourage positive alliances with other group members. "Beth, I think your suggestions might be very helpful to Susan and Jane. Could you tell us more about them?" Emphasize and model respect for all group members.
5. Interrupts frequently	Redirect group's attention to speaker who has been interrupted. "Leslie, hold onto that thought for a minute. I don't think Susan was finished." Remember to then go back to Leslie. When possible, ask for comments or responses from her before she interrupts. Again, you may need to restate rules about listening to others in the group.

Handout B-9 (page 2)

6.	Attempts to usurp power of leader	Maintain your role as group leader by redirecting this person's need to be "in charge." Invite her comments and ideas but set appropriate time limits. "I can see that you have several ideas on this subject, Elaine, but we need to move on to the next point. Perhaps we could talk further after class." Generally this style indicates some uncertainty about group acceptance. You need to help this person feel that she is a valuable part of the group, so she doesn't have to set herself above it in order to feel important.
7.	Discounts or negates group's ideas	Avoid the temptation to "convince" this person by long lists of facts or heated debate. Individuals within the group are entitled to their own points of view. Acknowledge this by saying, "We disagree on this concept," or "This idea doesn't seem to fit with your experience." Reassure the person that no one is pushing her to agree with or accept an idea. You may ask her to think about it further before formulating a definite opinion.
8.	"Perfect" parent	Focus on concrete specifics rather than generalities. For example, in discussing bedtime behaviors, ask her to share details of her child's bedtime routine which leads to her "no problems at all." Remember, a "perfect" appearance frequently serves to hide feelings of vulnerability. Work on helping this parent realize that "non-perfect" is not only acceptable, it is the universal human condition!
9.	Intellectualizes	As with the "perfect parent," the leader needs to move from abstract theory to concrete realities.
10.	"Different" in background, education, child-rearing style, etc.	Focus on her positive qualities which make her a valuable asset to the group. Avoid seeing her differences as weaknesses.
11.	Comments aren't related to topic at hand or are confusing	Help her to clarify her thinking by voicing your lack of understanding, i.e., "I'm not sure I see how that is related to others in the group. Would you explain your idea further," or "Do you mean ...?"
12.	Monopolizes discussion: has perennial problems	Set firm limits: be assertive about time parameters and the need for everyone to have an opportunity to participate. Arrange time outside of class to address problems or concerns at more length.
13.	Embarrassed by child's behavior in class	Acknowledge parent's feelings rather than avoiding the issue. Discuss with group how you might all be supportive of this parent and decide on specific intervention of child's behavior.

Handout B-10 (page 1)

Kohn, B. and M. J. Lieberstein (Clayton, Mo.: The Family Center)

Although this document refers to "classes" in some instances, the information presented is very useful to facilitators in any group setting, and was developed by The Family Center for use in support groups as well as in classes.

Common Problems in Group Leadership

Problem	Solution
1. Presenting too many ideas	Present only 2 or 3 ideas. Spend remaining time increasing understanding of these concepts rather than introducing new ideas.
2. Lecturing	Never talk for more than 10 minutes without asking for group reaction or participation.
3. Rescuing—taking care of people who don't need to be helped	See people as strong and capable rather than weak and vulnerable. Do this by focusing on their strengths and expecting them to behave in a strong, capable manner.
4. Concealed anger with a group member	Discuss expectations clearly and fully during the first session. Confront parents immediately if they don't meet these expectations. Don't let bits and pieces of anger accumulate.
5. Aligning with one spouse against the other	Encourage participants to discuss problems with spouse before making final decisions. Before giving advice, ask about spouses' feelings and opinions. Discuss both spouses' family histories.
6. Not liking or approving of a group member	Develop "positive regard" for all group members by focusing on their strengths and trying to understand what it would be like to "walk in their shoes."
7. Lack of rule enforcement	Establish a clear set of mutually agreed upon rules during the first session and enforce rules as problems arise. Don't let them accumulate.
8. Giving too much general advice	Never give advice unless it is asked for. Personalize it by asking open-ended questions first. Make your advice short (2 or 3 sentences), then wait for parent response before proceeding. Finally, make sure parents understand what you have suggested by asking for feedback.
9. Usurping power from parents or from the group	Structure lessons so that parents develop their own solutions to problems, rather than you telling them what to do. Encourage group members to give each other information and support (e.g., instead of answering a question a member poses to you, ask for opinions from the group).

10. Leader feels a group member knows more than she/he does (e.g., has educational expertise, background in child development, pediatrics, etc.)	See participant as a whole person, not just as his/her intellectual achievements or professional Respect his strengths and provide support where needed. Focus on participants' needs rather than your need for approval.
11. Using the group to aggrandize and empower leader instead of participants	Group leaders should develop resources for meeting their needs outside of the group. During group sessions, focus on parents' needs rather than your needs. If you have a problem (i.e., illness in the family) that is consuming a good deal of your energy and attention, tell the group. This avoids participants misinterpreting your behavior.
12. Leader loses control of the discussion	Develop a general outline for the class and control discussion enough to cover major points. ("That sounds like another whole discussion. Let's save it for next time." "We don't have time to discuss that now, but you might want to think about what your response is teaching your child.") Leave plenty of time in your outline for discussion.
13. Playing the role of a psychotherapist	Focus on the purpose of the group, which is education and support. Develop strategies for redirecting the group when the discussion begins to become too therapeutic (e.g., "I think that's very important. However, there isn't time to discuss it fully now. Let's make an individual appointment after the group session.") Protect both the individual and the group by acknowledging the situation and then moving on. ("Mary, I appreciate your sharing your problem with us. However, I think it may be too complicated for us to deal with here. Let's discuss it after class.") Be careful to offer continual support for this person. Don't ignore her.